Crusader Syria in the Thirteenth Century

Shirley, Janet.

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CRUSADE TEXTS IN TRANSLATION

About the volume:

The Old French 'Rothelin' Continuation of William of Tyre's *Historia* provides one of the best contemporary narratives of the history of the crusades and of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem in the mid-thirteenth century. Covering the period 1229–61, it has vivid accounts of the disastrous expeditions led by Count Theobald of Champagne (1239–40) and King Louis IX of France (1248–54), as well as of other events in the East. But the text contains far more than this, with a detailed description of Jerusalem itself, songs of protest written by crusaders, and a variety of marvels and adventures, including stories of Alexander the Great, and the poisonous snakes encountered by the Roman army under Cato.

This text is here translated into English for the first time, together with a narrative for the same years taken from another Old French Continuation of William of Tyre's work, part of *L'Estoire de Eracles*. Both accounts are translated from the *Recueil des historiens des croisades: Historiens occidentaux* vol. 2 (Paris, 1859).

An Introduction and full notes make these thirteenth-century events and ideas accessible to students of medieval history and to anyone interested in the lives and patterns of thought of people of that time.

About the author:

Janet Shirley is a distinguished translator of works on the Crusades and the French Middle Ages. Her previous translations include *The Song of the Cathar Wars*, published in this series in 1996.

Crusader Syria in the Thirteenth Century

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Crusader Syria in the Thirteenth Century

The *Rothelin* Continuation of the *History* of William of Tyre with part of the *Eracles* or *Acre* text

translated by
Janet Shirley

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Introduction

The continuations of William of Tyre

The famous *Historia Hierosolymitana* of William of Tyre and its translation into French as *L'Estoire de Eracles empereur et la conqueste de la Terre d'Outremer* inspired many later writers to continue this work and to note down events in and affecting the Holy Land in their own time. William's text described the history of the crusades and the Latin East from the time of the First Crusade (1095–99) until 1184. The large family of continuations, some written in Syria, others in France, dates from the thirteenth century and represents the efforts of various people to fill the gap between 1184 and their own day. Together these form a rich corpus of source material for the later crusades to the East, including the mid-thirteenth-century campaigns of Theobald, count of Champagne and king of Navarre, and Richard, earl of Cornwall, in Syria and of King Louis IX of France in Egypt.

The two texts offered here in translation are the *Rothelin* and the *Eracles* or *Acre* continuations. The first is so called from the name of the Abbé Rothelin, owner of a principal manuscript in the eighteenth century. It was published in 1859 in the *Recueil des historiens des croisades*[1] and is a complete work in itself, linked to a still earlier continuation by an opening résumé of events in Jerusalem in 1229. It concludes with the expulsion of Christians from that city in the year 1261.

The other text, covering the same years and published in the same volume, has been known as the *Eracles* from the general title of the French version of William's work, whose opening sentence names Heraclius, *Eracles*, emperor of Byzantium, who restored the True Cross to Jerusalem in 629. M.R. Morgan, however, suggests calling this section the *Acre* continuation of William of Tyre, since its earliest manuscripts were written in that city.[2] It survives in various redactions and some of the manuscripts take the story down as far as 1248, 1264, 1275 or, in one instance, to 1277. It is clearly a compilation, with sections describing subsequent history added from time to time. The excerpt translated here covers the same time-span (1239–61) as the *Rothelin* text.[3]

The manuscripts

These have been described and classified in the *Recueil* and by Mas Latrie, by Riant in 1881 and by Jaroslav Folda in 1973,[1] and are fully discussed by Morgan in the article quoted above.

All redactions of the *Eracles* or *Acre* continuation were composed in the

East, and at least seven of the surviving manuscripts were copied there.

The *Rothelin* continuation exists in twelve manuscripts. All twelve, says Morgan, were written in the Ile-de-France or northern France or Flanders, and the *Rothelin* text is 'a purely European production', probably written in or near Soissons.[2] The writer is well informed about this area – see for instance the end of chapter 75 where he gives the name of the abbot of St Médard as well as those of the count and the bishop of Soissons.

The family of manuscripts can be divided into two sub-groups of five and seven. An essential difference between them is that the smaller sub-family includes two songs of protest written by angry crusaders, and the other does not. The manuscripts in this small sub-group, however, do not include the long interpolation telling stories of Cato, Charybdis, snakes, and Alexander the Great, which is present in all seven manuscripts of the larger group.

Content of the *Rothelin* Continuation

This text in its fullest form offers constant surprises. Readers embark on an account of interaction between Christians and Saracens in the year 1229, only to be confronted almost at once by six chapters of solid description of the holy city of Jerusalem. Good Christians, says the compiler firmly, will enjoy this; others may skip. This is an almost exact transcription of the Old French text written in the late twelfth century, now known as *The Condition of the City of Jerusalem*. Next come several chapters describing pilgrimages to be made in the Holy Land. Chapters 12–14 plunge the reader, or the audience, into the bewildering world of prophecy, where stars and planets, woe and destruction, wolves and a pregnant camel combine to baffle interpretation. This is the Prophecy of the Son of Agap. Emerging from this, we have two brisk chapters on Saladin, his brother, and their many sons; then a striking passage on the Assassins, followed by a description of the role and duties of the caliph of Baghdad. Then follows a chapter bluntly entitled 'Of the wickedness of Frederick, emperor of Germany'. Only in chapter 20 do we find real history again, when crusaders from France gather at Marseille in 1239 and sail for Acre.

This was the crusade led by Theobald, king of Navarre and count of Champagne. Vivid pictures follow of men preparing for war, sharpening swords, shoeing horses, then of others out foraging and sweeping up rich plunder, oxen, buffaloes, camels, all kinds of livestock – a brief chapter on the various meanings of the name 'Babylon' – then the count of Bar's unforgivably foolish raid deep into enemy territory and the ensuing disaster at Gaza. Chapter 27 includes an interesting description of the Egyptian intelligence and signal system. Then comes the shocking defeat itself, followed in chapters 30 and 31 by the text of two songs, the first written by one of the captured lords and the next by a disillusioned crusader still serving in the host.

The commanders do nothing, he says, and how can poor men manage, those who put their estates in pawn before they came away?

Negotiations and truces follow. In 1240 (chapter 36) Richard of Cornwall arrives in Syria

The focus now shifts – chapters 37–9 – to the emperor Frederick II and his relations with the papacy.

Chapters 40 and 41 deal with the incursions of the Khwarazmian peoples and the second disaster near Gaza, the battle of La Forbie of 1244.

In chapter 42 King Louis of France embarks for the East. The narrative of his landing and struggles in Egypt goes swimmingly along until, right in the middle of a letter from the king's chamberlain, John Sarrasin, describing these events (chapters 43 and 44), the compiler switches into a lengthy passage about the dangers of the sea. Twenty-two days we were at sea, Sarrasin has just said, and suffered great distress. Ah, says the compiler in effect, many people do not know how dangerous the sea is, and he proceeds to tell them. Sirens, Charybdis and volcanoes fill chapter 45, and very effective they are. Next he remembers that there are dangers on land too, and in several chapters he gives us a lively description of the torments suffered by Cato and his knights on campaign in the deserts of Libya. Snakes, dragons and cockatrices throng on every page. Next we have the problem of the source of the Nile and a story about Alexander the Great. Most of this very vigorous section is based ultimately on parts of Lucan's *Pharsalia* and on Nicander and more immediately on the highly popular *Fet des Romains*. This is a compendium of anecdotes, history and legend thought to have been put together in the Ile-de-France around 1214. It is significant that one of the most important illuminated manuscripts of this work was copied in Acre.[1]

At the end of chapter 58 the compiler announces that 'we will return to our narrative' and in chapter 59 he continues what, on close inspection, turns out to be the interrupted letter from John Sarrasin. The remaining chapters tell of the strenuous efforts of Louis and his forces in Egypt, of their appalling suffering and ultimate defeat. Negotiations come next, truces sworn to and broken, fresh negotiations, then war between Egypt and Aleppo, the king's eventual return to France, local raiding and warfare, Bedouin activity, Christians shamefully at war with other Christians, Mongol victories and defeats and at last in the final chapter, 82, how Sayf al-Din Kutuz, the sultan of Egypt, was murdered by his successor, Baybars. The truces of a dead sultan cease to exist, and such Christians as were present in Jerusalem were expelled from the city. They made their painful way, suffering heavy losses, to the stronghold of Acre, where at this date, 1261, a remnant of Christians still clung to this fragment of the Latin kingdom.

As M.R. Morgan points out in the article cited above, the *Rothelin* chronicle is a work to dip into, a collection of heroic stories, and as such it marks a change in public taste. William of Tyre wrote to inspire men to defend the Latin kingdom and because he wanted posterity to know the truth; he was a

historian of record, he cared about facts. Now in the mid-thirteenth century his continuator writes as an entertainer, as a provider of thrilling yarns, of history as diversion.

Content of the *Eracles* or *Acre* Continuation

Our extract begins in 1239 with chapter 44 of book 33: the crusade of Theobald of Navarre sails from Marseille. The narrative moves swiftly to the disaster at Gaza, after which the crusaders retreat to Acre, where they remain for a long time and do nothing. Negotiations follow with the sultan of Hama who is at odds with Aleppo. Complex relationships between Egypt and Damascus are described; there is a truce between the Templars and Damascus, but the Hospitallers will not support it and make a truce of their own with Egypt. Ralph of Soissons marries Alice, queen of Cyprus and regent of Jerusalem, but is allowed no power and goes home to France.

Richard of Cornwall arrives, refuses to support either alliance, fortifies Ascalon, and goes home. The Ibelins take the city of Tyre while the Filangieri brothers, the emperor's men, are away. In chapter 53 we learn of Innocent IV's problems and Frederick II's deceitfulness; Innocent makes vigorous war in Germany and William, count of Holland, is crowned king of the Germans. The Filangieri brothers return to Tyre and are forced to surrender its castle. Egypt summons the Khwarazmian hordes; Damascus, Horns and Christians gather in alliance; the disaster of La Forbie, 1244, follows. In chapter 58 we are in France at Louis' apparent deathbed, when he recovers and insists on taking the cross. Chapter 59 deals with the conflict between Damascus, Aleppo and Egypt; Egypt lays siege to the Hospitallers in Ascalon; storms destroy the Egyptian fleet but the castle is undermined and taken. The last chapter of book 33 notes that Turcomans are laying waste the country all around Antioch, but adds that we must now return to the whole question of affairs in Syria.

Book 34 is frankly dull, an annal consisting of ever shorter and shorter notes, some of them confused, covering events from Louis IX's arrival in Cyprus in 1248. There can be little doubt that there is now a new author at work and that his annals are closely related to those to be found in the texts known as the *Annales de Terre Sainte*.[1] Our extract ends with the Greeks' recovery of Constantinople from the French in 1261.

Reliability of the texts

Both these texts, especially the *Rothelin*, full of rich detail, provide valuable information and indeed vivid pictures of the crusading expeditions of the early thirteenth century. Neither, however, 'supplies the complete picture of all the negotiations in which the Western leaders were involved',[1] and they are still

less satisfactory for the period between Richard of Cornwall's departure in the spring of 1241 and the battle of La Forbie. The *Eracles* or *Acre* text offers only a highly condensed account of these years, with very little on external relations.

There are occasions when these two texts conflict The relative dating, for instance, of the negotiations with al-Muzaffar of Hama, the Gaza campaign and the death of Count John of Mâcon in 1239 is hard to establish. Jackson argues that these abortive negotiations belong to the autumn of that year and has evidence for Count John's death in November.[2]

Perhaps the most valuable contribution of both these texts lies in the light they cast on the way men and women of that time saw themselves, and how they preferred to see their history. The *Rothelin* text, for instance, although scathingly critical of the nobles who rode so far, unsupported, into enemy territory and then settled down for a picnic (chapter 27), still shows these men as heroes in the epic mould. Commanders exhort their troops before battle *moult doucement*, very kindly, as Oliver and Roland did. The final defeat, when the few surviving nobles refuse to flee and cut down the Saracens in such great swathes, *moult granz essarz*, that they stand alone surrounded by the dead and none dare approach.them, could all come straight from the *Song of Roland* or any other heroic tale. Never mind what happened; that is how a French hero behaves in the face of disaster.

Another assumption eloquent of the differences between one time and another is the unquestioned belief clear in both texts that devotion to Christ demanded the killing of non-Christians. Pity might occasionally move the writer's heart, as in chapter 64 of the *Rothelin* chronicle, where the French ride in amongst Saracen tents and massacre men and women, old people and children, and 'it was sad indeed to see so many dead bodies and so much blood spilt', but then, as he reminds himself and his hearers, 'they were enemies of the Christian faith'.

Notes on the translation

The year given at the head of most chapters is supplied by the translator.

The expressions 'prime, terce, none' and 'vespers' refer to very early morning, to about 9 a.m., midday and evening, but are approximate. They are the names of some of the canonical hours of prayer, which would be said according to the daylight available at the time of year, not according to any notion of clock time.

'Outremer': The words 'outre' and 'mer' are joined, given an initial capital and used by modern writers as an equivalent for 'Palestine' or 'the Holy Land', a custom that was already beginning in medieval times. In fact these words simply form an adverbial expression meaning 'beyond the sea' and it is important to remember that the phrase was used of any journey across the Mediterranean in any direction.

'Griffons' in Old French meant 'Greeks', or rather 'those wretched Greeks', and was applied to the inhabitants of the Byzantine empire and members of the Eastern Orthodox Church. The word consists of the element *Grieu*, 'Greek', with an augmentative ending added.

'Poulain' is thought to have meant 'colt', or the young of any animal, and was used of Syrian-born Franks, settled colonials, whose ideas often differed sharply from those of crusaders newly arrived from the West. It does not necessarily mean 'half-caste'.[1]

Names of people and places

European personal names are almost all given in their English forms. Arabic names, except for such well known ones as 'Saladin', follow the transliterations used in P.M. Holt's *Age of the Crusades* (London and New York, 1986).

'Babylon' almost invariably means the capital of Egypt. The city's castle was known as 'the Cairo' from its name *el-Kahira*, 'the Victorious'. See *Rothelin* chapter 24, 'How many Babylons there are'.

Names and words printed in italic are as found in the text and have not been identified.

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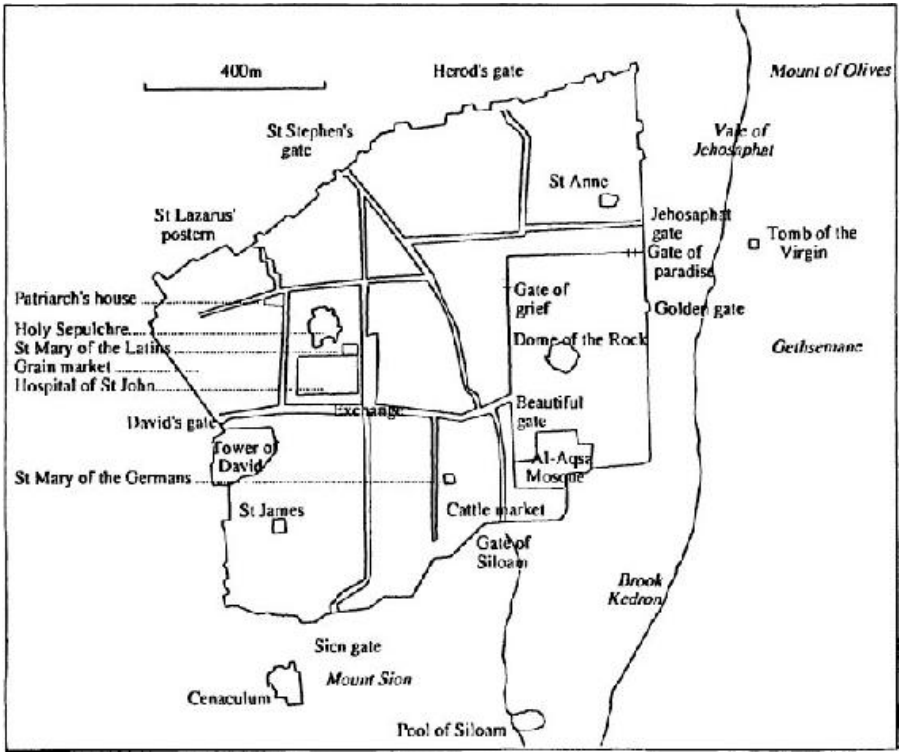
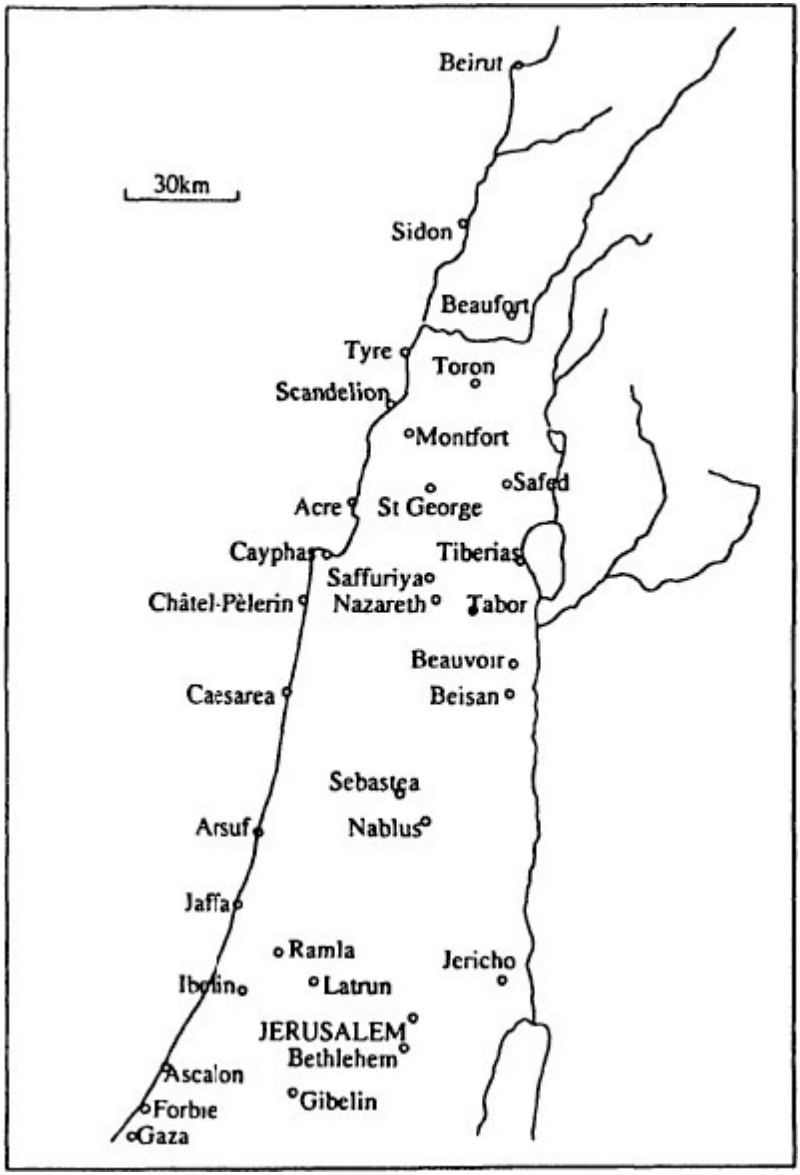
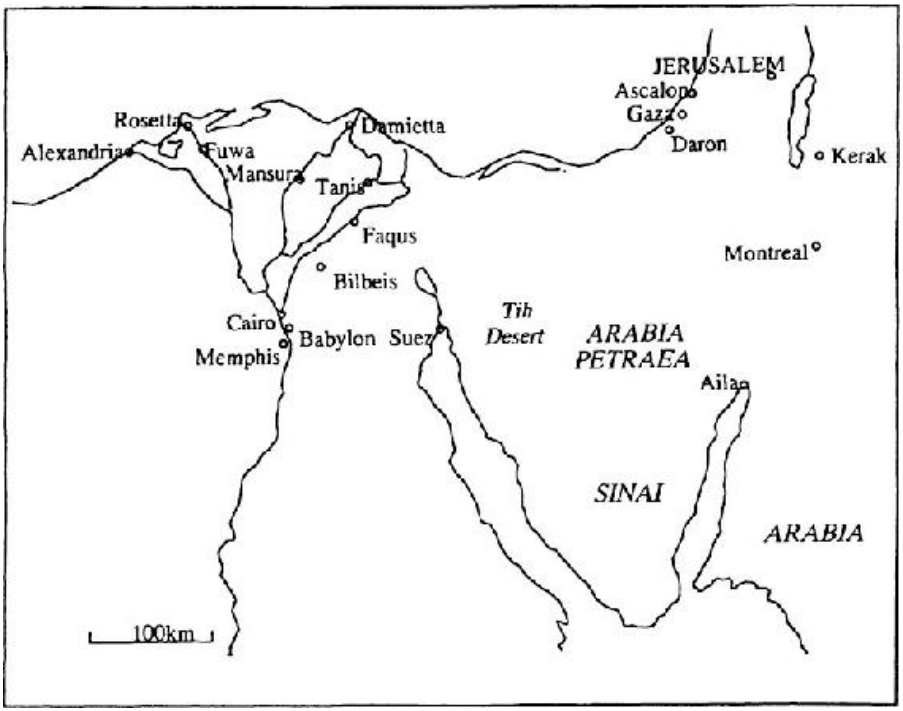


Plan of Jerusalem



Map of the Holy Land



Egypt, Arabia and part of Palestine

The *Rothelin* continuation of William of Tyre

CHAPTER 1 1229

How the Saracens attacked the Christians in Jerusalem

Great was the danger in which Frederick[1] left the Christians of the Holy Land in Jerusalem, for the city was completely open and unprotected. The Saracens had demolished all the fortifications, except the Tower of David, while the Christians were besieging Damietta[2] as we told you earlier.[3] Neither the emperor Frederick nor his deputy[4] did anything to repair the city's defences. The Saracens in neighbouring towns saw this clearly, and one morning crowds of villainous Saracens gathered and entered Jerusalem, intending to kill the Christians.[5] The Christians defended themselves vigorously, killing more than 500 and losing only one man, an Englishman.

CHAPTER 2

The condition of the city of Jerusalem on that day

As most good Christians are glad to talk and hear about the holy city of Jerusalem and the holy places where Our Lord died and lived, we will tell you what it was like on the day Saladin and the Saracens took it from the Christians.[6] Some will want to listen; others can go past this place.

Jerusalem is the most glorious and the most noble city in the world. It lies three days' journey[7] from Damascus and is not now situated in the same place as it was when Our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. Then, but not now, it stood on Mount Sion. The day the Saracens took it there was nothing in that place but a church and a monastery.[8] It was there that the house stood where Jesus Christ had supper with his apostles and created the sacrament of the altar.[9] In the same church was the place where he appeared to his apostles on Easter Day after he had been restored to life.[10] In the same church too was the place where he showed the wounds in his hands, feet and side to St Thomas on the octave of Easter.[11] And it was there that he apppeared to his apostles on Ascension Day[12] and ate with them; then, when they had accompanied him to the Mount of Olives, he ascended to heaven. To this same place they returned and waited for the Holy Spirit, whom Our Lord himself had promised he would send them. Here too did Jesus Christ send them the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.[1] In this same church was the place where my lady St Mary died, and from here they carried her to the valley of Jehosaphat for burial and laid her holy body in a tomb. In the place where her tomb stood was the church known as the church of my lady St Mary of Jehosaphat, and an abbey of black monks.[2] The church on Mount Sion was called the church of my lady St Mary of Mount Sion, and there was an abbey of monks there. These two abbeys stood outside the city walls, one on the hill and the other in the valley.

Mount Sion abbey was to the right, southwards, and the one in the valley of Jehosaphat lay to the east, between the Mount of Olives and Mount Sion. Mount Calvary and Our Lord's tomb were outside the city walls when Jesus Christ was crucified; now they are inside them. The city lay on a slope facing the Mount of Olives, which rises up to the east over the valley of Jehosaphat.

CHAPTER 3

Of the same

In the city of Jerusalem there were four main gates, each one opposite another in the form of a cross, with posterns in between. I will tell you their names in order: the Gate of David lay westwards, directly opposite the Golden Gates which faced east behind the Temple *Domini*;[3] it was built against the Tower of David. You could stand inside this gate and turn right into a street which led past the Tower of David, and so out onto Mount Sion through a postern in the street on the left. Just as you went out of the postern, you saw the church of my lord St James of Galicia, brother of my lord St John the Evangelist. It was there, they said, that St James was beheaded, and that is why the church was built there.[4] The main street running directly from the Tower of David to the Golden Gates was known as David's Street from that point to the Exchange. On the left of David's Tower was a large square where com was sold. A little further down David's Street, you came to a street on the left called the Patriarch's Street, because the patriarch lived at the top of it. The patriarch had a gate giving access to the Hospital. Next there was a gate into the church of the Sepulchre, but this was by no means its main gate. Reaching the Exchange where David's Street ended, you came to Mount Sion Street. Leaving the Exchange, you found a covered street, vaulted over, known as the Street of Plants, and here were sold all the vegetables, fruits and spices of the town. At the top of this street stood a fish market, and behind the fish market was a very large open area where cheeses were sold, and ducks and hens as well. To the right of this market were the stalls of the Syrian goldsmiths, and here were sold the palm fronds which palmers take home from the land beyond the sea. On the left of the market stood the booths of the Latin goldsmiths. Beyond them was a nunnery called St Mary the Great. Next there was an abbey of black monks known as St Mary of the Latins, and after that, on the right, the Hospital.

CHAPTER 4

Of the same

Straight on from the Hospital was the main entrance into the Sepulchre. In front of this was a fine open area paved with marble. To the left of the door

into the Sepulchre was the church of St James of the Jacobites. On the right and adjacent to the entrance were steps leading up to Mount Calvary. At the top of the Mount was a beautiful chapel leading into the church of the Sepulchre. Another flight of steps led down just inside the church entrance. Below Mount Calvary lay Golgotha. On the right was the Sepulchre's bell-tower, and also a chapel called Holy Trinity.[1] This chapel was large and roomy, for all the brides in the city came to be married there, and it also held the font in which children were baptised. The chapel was directly adjacent to the Sepulchre and had a door leading into the church. Straight on from this door stood the Monument,[2] and here the church was completely circular, and open above, not covered. The Monument itself was vaulted over, and contained the stone of the Sepulchre. Outside the Monument, at the apsidal end, was an altar called the *Chevet*,[3] where mass was sung every day at dawn. A wide paved area surrounded the Monument, so that processions could move all round it. Next, going east, was the Sepulchre choir where the canons sang; this was long. Between the canons' choir and the Monument there was an altar where the Greeks sang mass, but there was a partition separating the two, with a door leading from one to the other. In the centre of the canons' choir stood a marble lectern known as the Compass;[4] there they read the epistle. To the right of the high altar of the choir was Mount Calvary, so that when they were singing the mass of the Resurrection, the deacon singing the Gospel would turn towards Calvary as he said, '*Crucifixum*'. Then he would turn towards the Monument, saying, '*Surrexit, non est hic*'. And he would point: *'Ecce locus ubi posuerunt eum'*.[1] Then he would turn back and continue his Gospel. In the choir apse was a door by which the canons came in to their stalls on the right.

Between this door and Mount Calvary was a very deep cleft with stairs down into it, and here there was a place called St Helen. That is where St Helen found the cross, the nails, hammer and crown.[2] Into this cleft, at the time Our Lord was buried, they used to throw the bodies of thieves who had been crucified, hanged, or had their feet, hands or heads cut off. All the justice that was done, was done on Mount Calvary. It was given the name 'Calvary' because executions and all the requirements of the law were done here, and it was there they shaved the limbs that criminals were condemned to lose.[3]

As the canons left the Sepulchre, they had their dormitory on their left and the refectory on their right, next to Mount Calvary. Between these two lay their cloisters and courtyard. In the centre of the courtyard was a large opening through which one could see St Helen's chapel down underneath it, for otherwise it could not be seen at all.

CHAPTER 5

Of the same

Opposite the Exchange, joining the Street of Plants, was a street known as *Mal*

Cuisinat, Ill Cooked. This was where they cooked foodstuffs which were then sold to pilgrims; and they also washed heads there. It was reached from Sepulchre Street. Just opposite Ill Cooked Street was another called the Covered Street where cloth was sold, and this was all vaulted over; it led to the Sepulchre. The street leading from the Exchange to the Golden Gates was called Temple Street, and had this name because it led first to the Temple and then to the Golden Gates. On the left, going down this street towards the Temple, was the meat market where all the town's meat was sold. On the right was another street leading to the Hospital; this was called Germans' Street. On the left above the bridge was the church of my lord St Giles. At the top of this street stood a pair of gates called the Precious Gates, so called because it was through them that Our Lord Jesus Christ entered the city of Jerusalem when he went about on earth. These gates were in a wall which stood between the city and the Golden Gates wall.[1]

CHAPTER 6

Of the same

Between the city wall and the Golden Gates wall stood the Temple. This was approached across an open space more than a bowshot in length and more than a stone's throw wide. The whole area was paved, and so was known as the Pavement. On the right, as you came through these gates, was the Temple of Solomon,[2] where the brothers of the Temple lived. Directly between the Precious Gates and the Golden Gates was the church of the Temple *Domini*.[3] This was high up, above steep steps. Going up them, you came to another Pavement, an open area, very spacious and paved over its whole extent with marble and entirely surrounding the Temple church. This church was completely circular.[4] On the left of the Temple's upper Pavement stood the abbot and canons' private quarters, and here there were steps leading from the lower Pavement to this upper one and to the Temple. Eastwards, adjacent to the Temple church, was the chapel of the apostle, my lord St James the Less, placed here because it was here he was martyred when the Jews flung him down from the Temple.[5] Inside this chapel was the place where Our Lord Jesus Christ freed the woman who was a sinner as they were leading her to execution because she had been taken in adultery.[6]

At one end of this Pavement, going towards sunrise, you went down more steps to the Golden Gates. Once down them, you were in a wide open space, approaching the gates. There stood the court which Solomon built.[7] No one passed through these gates, which in fact were blocked up, and they were unblocked and used only twice a year. A procession went through them on Palm Sunday because Our Lord Jesus Christ came in through them that day and was welcomed in procession;[8] and another on Holy Cross day in September,[9] because it was through these gates that the Holy Cross was

brought back to the city of Jerusalem when the emperor Heraclius won it in Persia and brought it back to the city through that gate, and people went out in procession to meet him.[10] As no one ever left the city through these gates, there was a postern further along known as the Jehosaphat Gate. People living in that part of the city went out by it. This postern stood on the left of the Golden Gates. To the south you went down from the upper Pavement to the lower Temple, and so to the Temple of Solomon. On the left, going down from the upper Pavement, was the church of the Cradle, where God, they say, was cradled in his childhood.[1]

The church of the Temple had four doors set as a cross. The first faced west and gave city-dwellers access to the Temple. By the eastern door you reached the chapel of St James, and then the Golden Gates. The southern door led to the Temple of Solomon and the northern one to the abbey.

CHAPTER 7

Of the same

Now I have told you where the Temple and the Sepulchre stood, also the Hospital, and about the streets between the Gate of David and the Golden Gates, one running on from the other, the one eastwards and the other to the west. Now I will tell you about two other gates, which stood opposite each other.

The northern one was called St Stephen's Gate, and through it came all the pilgrims and everyone who travelled to Jerusalem from Acre and from all the land between the river[2] and Ascalon on the coast. Outside this gate, before entering the city, you had the church of my lord St Stephen on your right. It was there, they said, that my lord St Stephen was stoned to death.[3] Opposite this church, on the left, was a large building called the donkey-house, where the Hospital's donkeys and pack-animals were kept. This church was demolished by the Christians in Jerusalem before they were besieged, because it stood close to the walls. The donkey-house was not demolished and afterwards it was, in fact, essential to visiting Christians, who paid to enter Jerusalem when the city was under Saracen control, because they would never let them reside within the city. For this reason the donkey-house was essential to them. On the right of St Stephen's Gate and adjacent to the walls was the Jerusalem infirmary. Opposite this was a postern called the St Lazarus postern. After the Saracens took the city from the Christians, they used this entrance to admit Christians privately to the Sepulchre, for they had no intention of letting Christians learn anything about their affairs or those of the city. For this reason they let them in by the Patriarch's door in the street of the Sepulchre church, and never by the main entrance. But you can be sure that Christian pilgrims who wanted to go to the Sepulchre and the other holy places paid the Saracens very large sums of money; the Saracens reckoned the income at

30,000 bezants or more a year. Later, however, all Christians who should make such payments were excommunicated, so that this revenue declined.

Coming in by the main St Stephen's Gate, you found a street to the right and another to the left, leading south[1] to the Mount Sion Gate, and to a postern called the Tannery and straight on over the bridge. The street which ran to the Mount Sion Gate, was called St Stephen's Street. Reaching the Syrians' Exchange, you came to Sepulchre Street on the right. In this was the door into the house of the Sepulchre; through it those of the Sepulchre entered their houses and dwelling places. Coming to this Exchange, you found on the right a covered street, vaulted over, along which people went to the Sepulchre church. Syrians sold their fabrics in this street, and wax candles were made there. Fish was sold outside these Exchanges. Adjacent to them were three streets leading to the Exchange of the Latins. One was called the Covered Street, where the Latins sold their cloth, the second was the Street of Plants and the third, Ill Cooked Street. The Street of Plants led into Mount Sion Street and cut across the Street of David. Covered Street led into the Street of the Latins. This street was called the Arch of Judas Street, because it was said that Judas hanged himself there[2] and it contained a stone arch. On the left of this street was a church called St Martin's and near this gate was a church of St Peter. There, it was said, Jesus Christ put mud on the eyes of the man who had never been able to see.[3]

Outside Mount Sion Gate there were three roads; that on the right led to the abbey and church of Mount Sion; between the abbey and the city walls was a large courtyard and a church. Turning left and following the city walls, you came to the Golden Gates and from there went down into the valley of Jehosaphat. This was also the way to the Pool of Siloam.[4] On the right of this gate stood the church of St Peter in Gallicantu. This contained a deep ditch where it was said St Peter hid himself after he denied Christ; there he heard the cock crow and there he wept.[5] The road leading directly south from this gate went over Mount Sion, passing the abbey, down the hill and so on to Bethlehem.

CHAPTER 8

Of the pilgrimage in the Holy Land

Going down the hill you came to a pool in the valley called Germain's Pool, because a Jerusalem citizen of that name had it made to collect rainwater coming down from the hills; the city's horses were watered there.[1] Across the valley on the left not far away was a burial place known as Aceldama Pilgrims who died in the Hospital of Jerusalem were laid there. The piece of land where it stood had been bought with the pence for which Judas sold the flesh of Jesus Christ, as the gospel bears witness.[2] Outside the Gate of David was a pool to the west called the Patriarch's Pool, where the water of that area was collected

for horses to drink. Near this pool was a burial place called the Lion's Graveyard. It happened once, they say, on a day long ago, that Christians and Saracens fought a battle between this graveyard and Jerusalem in which many Christians were killed, and the victorious Saracens were going to burn them all next day because of the stench. But a lion came at night, so it was said, and put them all into this ditch, and so it is called the Lion's Graveyard.[3] Above the graveyard was a church where mass was sung daily.

About a league away was a nunnery where one of the pieces of the True Cross is said to have been found. The nuns belonged to a country called *Anegie*; some said it was the land of *Femenie*.[4]

The upright stake of the True Cross was taken from in front of the Temple. It had been brought from Lebanon with timber for the Temple, and left there because no one could find any place to use it where it was not either too long or too short. Thus it happened, they said, that people going to the Temple and getting their feet muddy would wipe their feet on it. Then one day a queen went that way, saw it covered with mud, wiped it with her own clothes and adored it. Now I will tell you about this piece of wood, and how it came, so they say, to this land. Adam lay on his death bed and begged one of his sons for the love of God to bring him a twig from the tree whose fruit he had eaten when he sinned. It was brought, and he put it in his mouth. Then he clenched his teeth on it, and his soul left him. After he died, no one could get the twig out from between his teeth, and so he was buried, they say, with the twig in his mouth. It took root and grew into a fine tree. Then when the Flood came, it uprooted the tree and carried it to the mountain of Lebanon. From there it was brought to Jerusalem with the other timber felled on that mountain for the building of the Temple. It happened, so it was said, that when Jesus Christ was hung on the cross, Adam's head was enclosed in the timber, and that when Christ's blood flowed from his wounds, Adam's head came out of the cross and received the blood. In memory of this all the crucifixes made in the land of Jerusalem have a head placed at the foot of the cross.[1]

The Georgians who are in the abbey from which part of the Cross was taken come from a country called *Anegine*. There are a king and a queen in that land, and some call it the land of *Femenie*, because the queen rides to war and maintains an army of women just as the king keeps an army of men. In this country women have only one breast, and I will tell you why: when a female is born and has grown a little, they cut off her right breast with a hot knife and leave her the left one to suckle her children. The reason they do this is so that the breast shall not get in her way when she is shooting in battle.

Three leagues west of Jerusalem there was a spring called the Fountain of Emmaus.[2] Emmaus castle stands beside it. They said that Our Lord was sitting by this spring with his two disciples when they recognised him in the breaking of the bread, as is reported in the Gospel which is read in Holy Church.[3]

CHAPTER 9

Now I return to St Stephen's Gate and to the street on the left which led to the Tannery postern. A good distance along this street another called Jehosaphat Street branched off to the left. As soon as you had gone a little further, you came to a crossroads, leading on the left to the Temple; from this you went straight to the Sepulchre. At the end of this road was a gate leading to the Temple called the Gate of Sorrow. Through this gate Our Lord Jesus Christ passed when they led him to Calvary to be crucified and that is why it was called the Gate of Sorrow. On the right of this crossroads was the stream to which the Gospel bears witness when it says that Our Lord crossed it as he was taken to be crucified.[4] A church of St John the Evangelist stood here, and there was also a large dwelling house. These both belonged to the nuns of Bethany, who lived there when Christians and Saracens were at war.[5]

Now I shall return to Jehosaphat Street. Between this street and the city walls, on the left, were streets forming as it were a town. Most of the Syrians in Jerusalem lived here, and these streets were called the Jewry. In this Jewry was the church of St Mary Magdalene; near the church was a postern, leading out not into the fields but along between two walls. On the right of Jehosaphat Street was the church of Rest; there, it was said, Our Lord Jesus Christ rested as he was being led to crucifixion. There too was the prison where he was held the night he was apprehended in Gethsemane. Just before that, in the same street, had stood the house of Pilate. Opposite this house on the left was a gate leading to the Temple. Close by and to the left of the Jehosaphat Gate, was a nunnery called St Anne's. In front of this was a spring known as the fountain above the pool. This spring does not flow, but was underneath a church placed over it. Into this pool, in the time of Jesus Christ, angels used to descend and move the water, and the first sick person to reach it after it was moved was cured of their disease.[1] Around this pool stood five porches where the sick used to lie.

As you left the Gate of Jehosaphat and went down into the valley of Jehosaphat, there was an abbey of black monks. In this abbey was a church of my lady St Mary, and in the church was the tomb where she was buried. When the Saracens captured the city they demolished the abbey and took the stones away to reinforce the city, but they did not touch the church.

Opposite this church at the foot of the Mount of Olives there was a church on a rock called Gethsemane. There Our Lord was arrested.[2] About a stone's throw away on the other side of the road, going towards Mount Olivet, was the church of the Holy Saviour. It was there Jesus Christ went to pray the night he was arrested and there the sweat fell from his body like drops of blood.[3] Hermits and solitaries lived in the valley of Jehosaphat, all the way along it as far as the Pool of Siloam, for I cannot name them all. On Mount Olivet was an abbey of white monks.[4] Near it on the right a road led to Bethany. On a bend of this road was a church called Holy Pater Noster. There it was said Our Lord

composed the Pater Noster and taught it to the apostles.[5] Nearby was the fig tree which God cursed as he was going into Jerusalem.[6] Between Pater Noster church and Bethany was a church called Bethphage, where Jesus Christ went on Palm Sunday; he sent two of his disciples into Jerusalem that day to look for a donkey and from there he rode the donkey into Jerusalem.[7]

Now I have told you the names of the abbeys and churches of Jerusalem outside the city, and of those in the streets of the Latins, but I have said nothing at all about the abbeys and churches of the Syrians, nor of the Greeks, Jacobites, Bedouin,[8] Nestorians, Armenians, or any of the other peoples who had churches and abbeys in the city but were not of the Roman obedience. The reason I have no intention of telling you about all these people just mentioned is that they are said never in any way to have accepted obedience to Rome.

CHAPTER 10

Of the pilgrimage to the Land

Now we have told you what the holy city of Jerusalem was like on the day when Saladin and the other Saracens took it from the Christians. Next we will tell you how pilgrims made their pilgrimages. Those in the West, that is to say in the kingdom of France, in Germany and the other lands in that part of the world, who want to go to this Holy Land, must go directly east. In those days they had to enter Jerusalem by St Stephen's Gate. (Near that gate he was stoned.)[1] He must go straight to the church of the Sepulchre of Our Lord Jesus Christ. At the entrance to the Sepulchre, outside on the right, was the chapel of Mount Calvary where Our Lord was crucified. Below is the place of Golgotha, where Our Lord's blood flowed down the rock. There, they said, the head of Adam was found after the flood. There Abraham made sacrifice to Our Lord.[2] There Our Lord said to the penitent thief who asked for mercy, 'Amen, I tell you! Today you shall be with me in paradise.'[3] There Longinus regained his sight through Our Lord's blood with which he touched his eyes. At the foot of Mount Calvary, on the right, were the place and the pillar to which Our Lord was tied, bound and flogged.[4] Next, eastwards, 44 steps down, was the place where St Helen found the True Cross.[5] In the choir of the church was the Sepulchre of Our Lord Jesus Christ and there beside it was the Compass that Our Lord measured with his hand, in the middle of the world, as it was said.[6] There they laid God when they took him down from the cross. There he was anointed and wrapped in the shroud. In the left part of the choir was Our Lord's prison. Near there he first appeared to Mary Magdalene after the resurrection.[7] On the right of the high altar, high up, the True Cross was adored. On Easter Eve when noon was past and the sun touched the arm of St Gabriel, whose picture was painted above the Sepulchre, holy fire came from above and lit one of the lamps of the Sepulchre.[1] On the left outside the door into the Sepulchre was the altar of St John the Baptist.

Beside the church of the Sepulchre stood the church of St Mary of the Latins and Mary Cleophas. There St Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James and the other women tore their hair when they saw Our Lord hanging on the cross.[2] Near there was the Hospital of St John. Two bowshots away was the Temple of Our Lord, with four entrances and twelve doors. There was the place of confession which used to be called *Sancta Sanctorum*.[3] There stood the pillar which the Saracens adored after capturing the city because it was said to be the altar on which holy Abraham intended to sacrifice his son.[4] In the middle of the Temple was a rock on which were placed the Ark of the Covenant, the rod of Aaron and the five books of Moses.[5] It was on this rock that Jacob fell asleep and saw angels ascending and descending to heaven on a ladder.[6] On this rock appeared the angel holding the sword with which he slew the people in vengeance when David numbered them.[7] In this Temple Our Lord was offered and presented by aged St Simeon.[8] Above this rock the angel appeared to Zachariah to tell him that he would father a son.[9] It was there Our Lord forgave the sins of the woman taken in adultery and delivered her from the Jews.[10] There Our Lord took shelter when the Jews tried to arrest him and the rock rose up above his head and made room for him and a star came down and gave him light.[11] Between the Temple gates, towards the path, is the spring of which they sing between Easter and Pentecost: *Vidi aquam egredientem de Templo a latere dextero*, etc.[12] The pinnacle of the Temple is the place where Our Lord allowed the devil to set him in order to test him.[13] From the pinnacle St James was flung; he was the first bishop of Jerusalem.[14] On the paved area around the Temple used to stand an altar where, under the old law, Jews would sacrifice doves and pigeons. Between this altar and the Temple the Jews killed Zachariah, son of Barachiah.[15] At the Beautiful Gate of the Temple lay the cripple whom St Peter and St John brought to his feet.[1] South of the Temple of Our Lord stood the Temple of Solomon. East from here inside the angle of the Temple enclosure were the bedstead and the bath of Our Lord, Our Lady's bed and St Simeon's tomb. East of the Temple *Domini* were the Golden Gates through which Our Lord rode on the donkey on Palm Sunday;[2] the three steps can still be seen in the hard rock of the stairs up to the Temple, to the northward. Outside the Temple walls was the Pool. This was a cistern where an angel used to come and move the water so as to heal the first sick person who entered it.[3]

CHAPTER 11

This tells of the holy places of the Holy Land of Jerusalem

Near here was the church of St Anne, mother of Our Lady,[4] and in it she lies. Up the hill from there stood the church of the Magdalene. North-east from the Sepulchre was the church of St Christopher, who lay in the ground for 800 years.[5] South of the Sepulchre stood Mount Sion. There was a fine church there

in honour of Our Lady, and it was in that place she passed from this world. From here the apostles carried her body to the valley of Jehosaphat. At the upper end of the choir in this church was an altar where the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles;[6] on the left of the entrance was the table at which Our Lord had supper with his apostles and disciples.[7] Down below is a hollow which held the stone from which came the water Our Lord used to wash his disciples's feet; and that is where he stood after his resurrection and said, 'Peace be among you! '[8] And yet the doors were closed. There St Thomas touched Our Lord's wounds. There on the left was the courtyard where St Stephen was buried. On the left was a chapel which had been the house of Caiaphas, in which Our Lord was bound, sentenced, mocked, beaten, spat on and crowned with thorns. On the right of Mount Sion, across the valley, was the Galilee[9] where Our Lord appeared to St Peter and the women.[10] Next to the church of Mount Sion was a small church where once stood the Praetorium mentioned in the gospel.[11] Beyond Mount Sion stood a church in the place St Peter went to after he denied Our Lord; this was called Gallicantu.[12] On the southern slope of the valley lay Aceldama. This was the field of blood which was bought with the thirty pence for which God had been sold.[1] Near there was the Pool of Siloam which is mentioned in the Gospel;[2] nearby was the tomb of the prophet Isaiah. Between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives lay the valley of Jehosaphat, which contained the tomb of Our Lady; and near this ran the Brook Kedron, called *Torrentem Cedron.* In this valley lay King Jehosaphat[3] and his tomb, which gave the valley its name. On the far side of the Brook Kedron the Jews arrested Our Lord and took him to be crucified. Our Lord used to go to the garden that stood there, and that is where he was arrested. In it was Gethsemane, where God left his disciples when he went to pray to his father and said, *Pater, si fieri potest, transeat a me calix iste.*[4] And there was a church there. A short stone's throw away was the place where he sweated and his sweat fell to the ground like drops of blood. In Gethsemane they showed a stone where the Jews bound Our Lord when they arrested him, so it is said. Near the valley of Jehosaphat was a church where holy Zachariah the prophet and aged St Simeon and St James the bishop were buried. From the summit of the Mount of Olives Our Lord rose to heaven. There was a fine church there, and in it were his footprints, made as he stood still before ascending. Nearby was a hollow where the body of St Pelagia the martyr lay.[5] Not far away stood a chapel in the place where Our Lord taught the Lord's Prayer to his disciples.

A league from Jerusalem was Bethany, where Simon the leper[6] had a house and where Our Lord forgave Mary Magdalene her sins and brought Lazarus back to life.[7] Further on was the *Quarantaine*, where Our Lord fasted forty days and forty nights.[8] Beyond this was the Garden of Abraham[9] and near the Garden was Jericho.[10] Two leagues from Jericho ran the River Jordan in which Our Lord was baptised. From there it is a day's journey to Kerak[11] and then another as far as Montreal.[12]

The road to Bethlehem runs from the Gate of David. Half way along this road was a church where holy Elias lived. Among the vineyards near Bethlehem was the tomb of Rachel, Jacob's wife. In Bethlehem were the church of Our Lady where Our Lord was born, the crib where he was laid and his hard stone pillow. In the cloister an arch sheltered the tomb of St Jerome and the burial place of the Innocents. One league from Bethlehem was a church in the place where the angel announced the birth of Our Lord to the shepherds. It was there that *Gloria in excelsis deo* was sung for the first time.[1] A little way up the road from Bethlehem was a small chapel where Our Lady rested after giving birth.

South from Bethlehem lay Hebron, where Our Lord formed Adam from the earth of Damascus. There too were buried the three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, with their wives, and Joseph, Adam and Eve. Near there Our Lord appeared to Abraham as the Trinity, for he saw three and adored one.[2] A league from Jerusalem was the place where the Holy Cross was found, and where it grew. Two leagues from there was St John of the Wood, where Our Lady greeted Elizabeth;[3] there St John was born, son of Zachariah.[4] Another league on was the castle of Emmaus, where Our Lord appeared to his disciples on Easter Day. Three bowshots from Jerusalem was a chasm called the Lion's Graveyard. A lion placed eleven thousand martyrs in this chasm in the time of King Chosroes.[5]

Seven leagues north of Jerusalem were Nablus and the well beside which Our Lord talked with the Samaritan woman.[6] There stood the mountain to which Abraham took his son Isaac in order to sacrifice him.[7] Two leagues away was Sebastea where St John the Baptist was beheaded and the dust of his body lay there.[8] Ten leagues eastwards stood Mount Tabor where Our Lord was transfigured.[9] Not far from there was Mount Hermon where the city of Nain stood. There, outside the city gate, Our Lord brought a child back to life.[10]

East of this lay the Sea of Galilee, which is simply a freshwater lake formed by the River Jordan and the other streams which run into it. By the Sea of Galilee Our Lord ate with his apostles after his resurrection.[11] He ate the backs of fishes, leaving their backbones stripped bare, but the rest of each fish remained whole. Then he threw them into the water and the fishes at once came to life again and swam off with the others, but all without backs except for the stripped backbones. These fish are as large as or larger than freshwater thombacks or mullets in France. Beside this sea was the place where Our Lord satisfied the hunger of five thousand men, and of the women and children too, with five loaves and two fishes. And the leftover fragments of these five loaves and two fishes completely filled twelve baskets.[12]

East from here lay the city of Nazareth. It was here that the holy angel Gabriel announced to Our Lady that the son of God would take flesh within her.[13] Her home was there, and so too was the spring from which she fetched water to give Our Lord. In the stream that flowed from it Our Lady used to

wash the clothes she dressed him in. This was the spring to which Our Lady used to send Our Lord when he was a little older, and he was always glad to go and fetch water in jugs and pitchers or other containers.[1] This was later, after they came back from the land of Egypt.

Near Nazareth was a town called Cana of Galilee. In it was the place where Our Lord changed water into red wine, as it says in the Gospel.[2] All these pilgrimages I have told you about are in the Holy Land of Jerusalem and the Holy Promised Land.

Now I will tell you about the other more distant pilgrimages. Near the city of Damascus was a mountain and on this stood a church of Our Lady, St Mary of the Rock, so it was said. In this church were twelve nuns and eight monks. The place was called Sardenay; some people referred to it as Our Lady of Sardenay.[3] In this church was a wooden tablet measuring one ell in length and half an ell across. On it, carved into the wood, was depicted the image of Our Lady St Mary. Oil smelling sweeter than balm came from this image, and many sick people used to anoint themselves with it and were much helped by it. Yet however much was taken, the quantity of oil never grew less. All the Saracens of the neighbourhood used to go to this church on Lady Day in mid-August and in September,[4] and there they prayed, adored and made offering. This image was made in Constantinople; a patriarch of Jerusalem brought it away; an abbess asked him for it, was given it and took it to the place I spoke of.

Tortosa is the place where a church was first built in honour of the Mother of God. Originally it was dedicated jointly to Our Lady and St Peter, the apostle.

In Beirut there was an image of Jesus Christ made soon after he ascended into heaven. Out of hatred to Our Lord, the Jews crucified this image. They struck it in the side with a lance and from this side flowed water and blood. Through this miracle many believed in Our Lord. This water and blood were used to anoint sick people and many were healed.

In the city of new Babylon in Egypt and at the Cairo – Babylon was the city and Cairo the castle – in this Babylon there was a spring. In it Our Lady washed the clothes of her dear son when they fled from King Herod into Egypt. The Saracens felt great reverence for it and were happy to go and wash in it. This spring watered the trees which bore the true balm. In Cairo castle in those days there was a date-palm bearing fruit. Our Lady St Mary one day was under this tree and wished for some dates, but the tree was too tall and she could not get them. The tree bowed itself down to her feet. The glorious lady took some fruit and then the tree rose up again in the sight of many Saracens and heathens who were present. Then the Saracens cut the tree down, but next day they found it standing straight up again, undamaged, with no cut or axe-mark to be seen. From then on they treated the tree with great reverence.

CHAPTER 12

Prologue to the prophecy of the son of Agap

You have heard about some of the holy places and the pilgrimages in the Holy Land beyond the sea at the time when Saladin, the great prince of the Muslims, conquered the Christians and took the Holy Land from them, as the people of the country show and describe them. But because the unbelievers possessed then, and do still possess, a written work composed much earlier by a Saracen Muslim, from which those who read it will learn much about events of Saladin's days, and earlier – and later too, for many events have not yet occurred, and Saracens consider this writing prophetic and say that all its contents will come true – for this reason we will repeat it for those who would like to hear it.[1]

CHAPTER 13

Here begins the prophecy of the son of Agap[2]

This is what is said in the book of the son of Agap, an unbelieving follower of Muhammad's law. This son of Agap was a physician and a philosopher, and the word 'philosopher' rings as if to say, one who sets the sciences in order. Through astronomy the son of Agap knew the courses of the stars and the planets. This is what he said:

> Whoever reads this work will know that I have laboured, struggled and studied with all my strength to write these passages, which are of deep knowledge, and must realise too that no philosopher can succeed who is not wise, truly valiant and powerful in learning. Nor have I made this study, this work, for idiots but for kings and wise men. Listen then! Hear tell of the end of the kingdom of those who hold and follow the law of Muhammad. Learn that in the West a star will appear, its tail long as a lance and its face round like a shield. In those days the kingdom of the Saracens shall be destroyed. Then out of Arabia shall come a sign and after him a noble man who will reign over the earth and over the mountains and long shall he rule without battle. After him shall come a nation who will be called Turks. At the beginning of their time a king will come whose people do not believe in God and they will destroy the city of Bilbeis.[1] Without blame, without guilt shall he lose it, and very cheaply shall he sell his sons, his daughters and his men; he shall give them away as worthless. After this man shall rule one who bears a yellow banner.[2] His eyes are black and he will be true and compassionate in his words. He will conquer his enemies and take Damascus. In his time shall many men's heads be cut off. A man of his kinship[3] shall attack the city of Tripoli, and that day there will be

much suffering among the men of that kingdom. And he will sell the men of the kingdom at a very low price. Woe unto you, Hattin, let me weep for you, for your commanders shall be led away like camels and your knights condemned, brave men turned coward and faint-hearted! Woe be to you Ascalon, to your houses, your wealth and your strongholds! You shall be overthrown and barely a trace of you remain. And he who bears the yellow banner shall take Daron, Beirut and Sidon. Many shall fly before him in terror in those days, many shall fall under his feet, no city or castle shall stand before him, none but Tyre. The city of Tyre, no one shall take, for God will defend it. Woe be to you, Arabia[4] and to the north for fear of him! Woe be to you, Jerusalem! By his skill and wisdom shall this man take you, his enemies shall lie under his feet and he will give them away for a trivial price.[5] Woe be to you, Acre! In you shall be great fear, great suffering and darkness. Terrible will be your anguish, your houses soaked in the blood of slaughter. Sorrow be upon you, fields of Acre! Many a stream of blood will flow across you, in a single day great ladies will die by thousands; the river will run red with your blood. Vessels will put hurriedly out to sea, will be shattered and many people drowned. You will weep blood, my friends, not tears. After that a great king will come, will land in Acre and will stay there because of this. He shall be lord of counsel and of reason, shall be of the lineage of kings and shall bring with him a great host raging like fire. All shall be under his command. Another king will come to his help and he and his men will take Acre by force of numbers.[1] He will kill and enslave, but never shall he be able to free Jerusalem from the hand of him that bears the yellow banner. How gladly would I live long enough to be there then and give him good counsel! It would be in the name of God.

CHAPTER 14

Of the same

But after seven times four years and half one more, the Turks will lose the land captured by the lord of counsel, bearer of the yellow banner. And these shall be the signs: great hosts will come joyfully from beyond the sea, will gather in Egypt as those others did before, and go forward like thunder. They will have no fear of death and their banners will move onward. Thin-faced and tall shall be their leader[2] and all shall be under his command. His lordship shall be above the lordship of the kings and all shall be obedient to him and to his orders. This is no marvel, for all his armies will obey his commands – the commands of God! – and the victory shall always

be his. Sorrow be to the Turks in the days of this lean man, for in those days they will lose their whole lordship! This has God decided and laid down. And I speak truly, for in the month of July the Turks' kingdom and their rule shall perish. Then people will say that this man is wise. I tell no lie, for these unbelieving peoples will press onward one after another, eager for war. Fearful and anxious, all the kings of the heathen will tremble before them.

Oh Damietta,[3] sorrow be upon you and all your neighbourhood in the time of this thin man! Where is the beauty of your courtyards, where are your sweet fruits? Where are your tall and noble palm trees? Indeed they shall be cut down, every one of them; it will be hard to believe they ever existed. Woe to the knights of the Cairo, for battle shall rage right into the camel market and into the city and shall pierce the hearts of all who see and hear it. New-born infants shall turn old and white-haired for anguish, the birds of the air shall gorge themselves on the flesh of the slain and the city of the Cairo shall perish.

Woe be unto you, Egypt, for you shall be called 'blackened' and such shall be the meaning of your name, *Terre Nercie*, blackened land;[1] fire shall burn you because of your sins. And in the time of this thin man Jerusalem shall be destroyed and its walls flung down; at this the whole world shall weep. Great too will be the grief for the captivity of Egypt. Then *Nix* and *Xuan*,[2] two of Egypt's noble cities, shall be destroyed; then in great violence and very suddenly shall Egypt perish, it shall fall as a flood falls, as a stream tumbles down a mountainside. And a man of noble birth will come and will take Damascus and Palmyra which is beyond Damascus and all the surrounding country – but he will not keep them as long as a year and four months.

Weep, you people of the country, weep, for you will see many men's heads cut off! Much will you see then to astonish you, and much hardship. Wolves will gather, and you shall see to what end the land of Egypt will come. Pharaoh's kingdom will perish, both Egypt and Syria; in men and in riches it will decline. Nothing will be seen there but wild beasts in waste land. Then by God's will Baalbek and Horns will be taken and devastated. Great battles will be fought between peoples and great numbers slain. Muhammad will be angry, grief will be bitter. The Arabs will be destroyed and their power will end. The armies which came from the west will vanish away like snow. Many men will be discovered living wild in waste land like animals. All will be reduced to utter poverty, seven days and seven nights shall they weep.

Now a great man will come from the north, and a king of Araby will come and in that cruel time will destroy Mecca. The battle will

> draw near. And in the fields shall be found a she-camel heavy with young; she will give birth, and those who see her will say, 'This camel belonged to the Turks'. And nowhere will anyone find clear water to drink. After this Antichrist will come, and will change the condition of many people from what they were before. The River Nile will hardly rise at all. Bad people will mix with good, just as water is mixed with wine. This will continue for four years and four months. In the West a star shall be born, and beyond this none shall speak. Then shall follow the day of judgement upon those who are not in the way of Our Lord Jesus Christ.
>
> Listen to me, you friend of God, hear the good things I have said! I have learned them from good masters and from those who speak goodness. All that you have heard will happen. However much these things may delay, they cannot fail.

Here ends the record of the book of the son of Agap.

The man who destroyed the city of Bilbeis was Amaury, king of Jerusalem. The bearer of the yellow banner was Saladin. The kinsman who came to his help was his brother, Saphadin. Saladin took Damascus and attacked the city of Tripoli. He besieged Tripoli, and razed the defences of the city of Ascalon and destroyed it, for fear of the Christians after they took the city of Acre back from him. He captured Daron, Sidon, Beirut and Jerusalem and the whole of the Promised Land except the city of Tyre. The king who took Acre by force of numbers and killed its people was Philip, king of France. The king who helped him was King Richard of England. He was quite unable to free Jerusalem from the hand of Saladin, bearer of the yellow banner. These things are found written in the preceding account.

CHAPTER 15

Here is the account of Saladin and of his heirs who were disinherited

Saladin disinherited many people and conquered more lands than all the unbelieving Muslims who ever lived before him. All his life he succeeded in everything he undertook, but as soon as he died his children lost nearly all of it, as the patriarch of Jerusalem reported to the pope. The pope of Rome, Innocent III, sent to ask the patriarch of Jerusalem to enquire into the usages and customs, the lands and names of the unbelieving princes whom the Christians were going to attack in order to conquer their lands. The patriarch enquired, and wrote back to the pope as follows.[1]

> There were two great Muslim brothers. One was called Saladin and the other Saphadin.[2] Saladin died and left fifteen sons. Saphadin had them all killed but one and seized all the lands Saladin had

bequeathed to them. He let the survivor, *li Coradinz*,[3] keep the whole land of Aleppo, with its castles, cities, towns and all appurtenances, all to be held of him. In this way Saphadin put up with him for a while. Saphadin had thirteen sons.[4] He gave extensive lands to seven of them and rich revenues to the other six. Saphadin's eldest son was called *li Quemerz Malealinz*;[1] to him he gave the whole land of Egypt – Cairo and Babylon, Alexandria and Damietta, and all their appurtenances. When Saphadin died, this man continued as lord over all his brothers. Saphadin's second son was called *li Coradinz*;[2] to him he gave Damascus and the holy city of Jerusalem, the whole Promised Land and the kingdom and all their appurtenances. To his third son, *Meschipes*, he gave the whole land known as *Gimelle* with all the land round about it and all its dependencies. To his fourth son, *Mehemodom*, he gave the entire kingdom of Asia[3] and everything belonging to it. To his fifth son, *Mehelchissemaphat*, he gave the kingdom of *Sarro* and its dependencies. His sixth son, *Melchisenech*, received the kingdom of *Baudas* and all its appurtenances. As for his seventh son, *Salafaz*, he decreed that each of his brothers should send him every year two excellent horses, saddled, and one thousand Saracen bezants. To two of his other sons Saphadin gave the whole income and all the offerings from the Temple and the Sepulchre of Our Lord. This was reckoned at more than 30,000 Saracen bezants a year. The tenth and eleventh sons received the income and all the offerings made to Muhammad and to the temple in the city of Mecca. This was reckoned at 30,000 Saracen bezants or more. To the twelfth and thirteenth of his sons, Saphadin gave the crossings and the revenue from the River Nile, which spreads over and waters the lands of Egypt in the month of August. This was worth at least 40,000 Saracen bezants a year to them. Saladin had won all these sources of wealth with Saphadin's help, and that is why people said it was right for Saphadin to be lord after his brother, rather than his nephew who had not contributed in any way.

CHAPTER 16

Account of Saphadin and his heirs

When Saphadin went out riding, he covered his head with a length of scarlet samite. When he visited his sons, they would go out a long way to meet him, and as they drew near would throw themselves to the ground before his horse's feet. Then they would get up and bow down very humbly and would kiss his hands and feet four times, three times while he was still on horseback and once after he

dismounted. He did this once a year. When he had spent as much time as he pleased with them and was going away, he would give fine rich gifts to each of them, and over and above these he gave each one a golden ring with his picture on it. Then he would kiss them one after another, take leave and go. Saphadin insisted that his face should not be seen in public except on ten occasions in the year. When any kings or princes sent envoys to him, they were received on the first day in the hall of his palace. Here there would be numerous well-armed sergeants guarding the entrance, at least two hundred of them or more. In this place the envoys were richly and generously supplied with everything they needed. On the second day Saphadin's translators and interpreters asked the envoys what they wanted and why they had come; then they would go to Saphadin and report to him. On the third day the envoys were brought before Saphadin, for no stranger could approach or speak to him before the third day. Saphadin had very many wives and an even greater number of concubines, according to the law of Muhammad, as his forbears had had. When it pleased him, he had them brought to him in his palace, and he would be happy to see them, talk with them and relax in their company. It sometimes happened that if one of them had borne him a son, he would lie with her rather than the others. All the men who served and protected Saphadin's wives had been castrated. No other man dared go near there unless on his orders, or he would be severely punished.

Saphadin and all his sons wanted to give back to the patriarch of Jerusalem and the Christians all the land the Christians were holding at the time they lost it, and pay them a large sum each year, on the understanding that there should be permanent peace between themselves and the Christians. Such a peace, however, did not please the Christians, so that the plan failed, for the Christians said they would never make peace with unbelievers, it would be against God and against reason.

CHAPTER 17

Account of the Assassins and their lord

In the land of Damascus and Antioch there was a people known as Assassins.[1] Their lord was called the Old Man of the Mountain. These unbelieving Muslims ate pork and lay with their own mothers, sisters, daughters and all the women they could get, contrary to the laws of Muhammad. They lived in high mountains and in great castles and fortresses. The country was rich in game, which was very useful to them. Near and far, all kinds of people went in terror of this prince, for he often used to have people killed without right or

reason. This lord possessed a fine palace, full of rich, beautiful and magnificent things, surrounded by high ramparts, and extremely well defended. It had only one single entrance and no other way in. Here in this palace he had the sons of his villeins brought up, from the moment they were in their cradles. From then on these children saw no one but their masters, who taught them various trades and various languages. They also taught them to fear their lord and obey his commands, and told them that in this way, and in no other, they would attain paradise. They never left the palace until the day their lord sent for them in order to have someone killed. When such a man appeared before him, the lord would ask whether he wanted to obey his commands and through them achieve paradise. The man would answer just as he had been taught, 'Yes, lord, whatever you wish, in whatever way you command.' Then the lord would give each of them a sharp and well-honed knife and send them wherever he wanted in order to do harm and kill someone. If they could then escape and return to their lord, they received great honour and glory, wealth and power in that country, more than any others. But if they were taken and killed, they believed for certain that their souls would stand before God in paradise.

CHAPTER 18

Of the caliph of Baghdad

The unbelieving Muslims had a lord whom they all obeyed, one who held, they said, the place of Muhammad on this earth. They called him the caliph of Baghdad. He was feared and obeyed by all of his law in Baghdad, and could only be seen twice in a month. This caliph absolved, excommunicated, and granted indulgences, remissions and forgiveness of sins to unbelieving Muslims just as the pope of Rome does to Christians. At times he would grant very great pardons to any unbelievers who would attack Christians, absolving them of every sin they had ever committed and of all that they ever would commit in the rest of their lives; thus they would save their souls. He had this pardon preached and proclaimed throughout all the lands which obeyed him and their law. When this caliph rode on pilgrimage to Muhammad in the city of Mecca, and to the other places in that city which unbelievers consider good and holy, and had prayed in the temple of Muhammad's law, he would sacrifice animals, and he and his people would eat and drink plentifully before he went away. Afterwards he would ride home in pomp and great glory, wearing his crown, with his people joyfully celebrating around him. Saracens honour and revere this caliph so profoundly that when they approach him, they go down onto the ground at his feet, they kneel and bow down before him almost as devoutly as if he were God. The seat of the caliph and the headquarters of all Muslim unbelief are in the city of Baghdad, just as Rome is the seat of the pope and the head of all Christendom. In the city of Mecca were

the principal and most important pilgrimages of the unbelieving Muslims which Muhammad commanded, preached and recommended in his law and his commandments. Infidel Muslims believe they are released from their sins when they make a pilgrimage there, just as Christians are when they go to the holy land of Jerusalem where God died and lived. Now we will stop talking of these things and go back to recalling events and describing them to all who want to listen.

CHAPTER 19

Of the wickedness of Frederick, emperor of Germany

In these holy places of which we have told you there were, in the days when Christians held the Holy Land, great churches, minsters, and fine rich chapels, also great abbeys and religious houses, rich and beautiful, handsomely adorned and well endowed, of black monks, of the abbey of Prémontré and the Cistercian order, the Augustinians and other orders of recluses and hermits and others who followed the religious life. But when the Saracens conquered the land and took it from the Christians, as we told you earlier, they knocked them down, demolished, overthrew and destroyed them all, except for the church of the Sepulchre and some others. They spared these not out of love for Christians, but for the sake of the heavy taxes, the extensive business and rich offerings the Christians provided when they made their pilgrimages. They refrained from demolishing these buildings because of the great wealth they got from them every day. But when the pope and the patriarch understood this, they issued a general sentence of excommunication everywhere upon all men and women who should give them any payment, wages, or purchase money when on pilgrimage to the holy places. For this reason the Saracens did not receive nearly as much income as before.

The Saracens had turned the holy Temple of Our Lord into one of their *mahommeries*[1] and so it remained under the treaty Frederick made with the sultan, as you have already heard. Frederick did not rebuild the churches of the holy places, nor did he strengthen the holy city. Such was his fondness for the unbelievers, so close his intimacy and friendship with them, that he did them more honour and took more pleasure in their company and their affairs than in those of any other people. He employed infidel Muslims as his chamberlains and confidential servants, used those who had been castrated to guard his women, and in many ways followed Saracen customs and manners. Whenever he received envoys from unbelievers, he would greet them so kindly and with such delight that all were astonished, and would give them handsome and expensive gifts. He often sent splendid and costly presents to the sultan, and the sultan behaved in just the same way to him and his envoys. For this reason the pope and all Christians who knew of this were very much afraid he had fallen into the unbelief of Muhammad's law. Others, however, maintained that

he believed none of it, and that whenever he felt like it he would say privately that he had not yet decided which faith to destroy and which to keep as the best. He also said, they alleged, that Moses had fooled the Jews, Jesus Christ the Christians and Muhammad the Saracens.

CHAPTER 20 1239

Christians take the cross in Navarre and all over France

The pope realised that Frederick was not going to put forward any plan for freeing the Holy Land from unbelievers. He sent to France, England and other parts of Christendom, ordering the clergy to preach the cross beyond the sea, and renewing all the pardons, indulgences and remissions which his predecessors had granted to crusaders. Then many brave men and good knights took the cross. In France these were: Theobald, count of Champagne and king of Navarre;[1] Peter Mauclerc, count of Brittany;[2] his brother, John, count of Mâcon;[3] Amaury, count of Montfort;[4] the duke of Burgundy;[5] the count of Bar-le-Duc;[6] the count of Joigny;[7] the count of Grandpré;[8] the count of Sancerre;[9] Simon of Clermont;[10] his brother Ralph;[11] the lord of Bove;[12] Ralph, brother of the count of Soissons;[13] Richard of Beaumont;[14] Robert Malet;[15] Matthew of Marly;[16] Le Bouteillier of Senlis;[17] Stephen ofQuierem;[18] Philip of Nanteuil;[19] Guy Mauvoisin;[20] Girard of Aubeville and Giles of Arsies.[21] Almost all the best knights of France took the cross with them, and so did many other knights and many ordinary people. In England, Richard, brother of the king of England and earl of Cornwall,[22] took the cross, as did many noblemen and very many of the commons of that land.

The French leaders who had taken the cross decided to set off with the August passage, and ordered each man to prepare whatever armour, horses and other things he would need. As the date of the crossing came nearer, but before it was time to leave, Frederick, emperor of Germany, sent word that if they would wait one year he would definitely go with them and would bring all his resources to help them win the land. When the barons heard his envoys telling them this, they were amazed, for every one of them was ready and prepared, on the point of setting off, as were all the other pilgrims who were travelling from France. When they had discussed the matter, they answered Frederick's envoy and said that in order to have such support from so powerful a prince as the emperor of Rome, both by sea and by land, they would wait one more year, but that this would do very great harm both to themselves and to the other crusaders. When the barons and the other crusaders had waited this year and the crossing of the following August was drawing near, Frederick sent his envoys to them again and told them that he had a great deal of business to attend to and was not at all ready to set off, but that if they would like to wait one more year, then he would set off and would go with them without fail. The barons talked together and they saw very clearly and said in council that the

emperor of Rome's message was nothing but guile, trickery and deceit, sent because he was determined that the pilgrims should not cross the sea with his support to make war on the unbelieving Muslims who were his dear, close and intimate friends. The barons told the envoys that they certainly would not wait any longer and that the pilgrims had suffered great harm from having had to wait so long. The envoys returned to their lord, having done nothing towards fulfilling their task or their reason for attending.

The barons and pilgrims of France set off and they all assembled at Marseille for the August crossing. Some, but not many, went through Lombardy into Apulia. Theobald, count of Champagne and king of Navarre, with almost all the other French noblemen we mentioned above and all the other pilgrims who were at Marseille and able to make the crossing, went aboard the ships which had been prepared for them. The sails were hoisted and as soon as they had a fair wind they set out. Many poor people were prevented from crossing by lack of money, and others by illness and physical troubles. When the fleet and the pilgrims' ships were only two days from Acre, so the sailors said, a great storm arose at sea and scattered them so violently that they gave themselves up for lost. This storm tossed the ships and drove them onto various islands, onto Cyprus, Sicily, Corsica and Sardinia. By God's grace, none of the vessels was lost, so far as anyone could tell. They waited in Sicily until the sea was calm. As soon as it grew calm, they went aboard, made sail and with a good wind soon arrived in Acre harbour.[1] It was not long before all the ships reached port and all the travellers gathered in the city. They formed a very large force. Some were lodged inside the town and others outside it. Here they rested for a time and refreshed themselves after the great distress, the great fear and danger they had suffered at sea.

CHAPTER 21 1239

How the Saracens demolished the Tower of David

When the Saracens heard what a large number of Christians had arrived in Acre, they became very anxious. They gathered cavalry and footsoldiers as fast as they could and made straight for Jerusalem, which had no defences except the keep, known as the Tower of David. The Christians had begun to fortify the city near the St Stephen Gate, using the alms they received for this purpose, and had repaired a short stretch of the ramparts and a few turrets, but the moment the Saracens got there, they demolished all this and pulled it down. They laid siege to the Tower of David and attacked its tiny garrison from every side. These men put up as strong a defence as they could, and in fact forced the Saracens to pull back and call off their attack. The emperor Frederick's deputy[1] had not provided enough men, victuals, arms, engines or any of the other equipment needed to defend a castle. The Saracens realised this, and knew the tower could not hold out long, being so badly equipped.

They talked to the defenders and offered to have them taken safely to Christendom, with their wives and children and all their possessions, if they would surrender the castle. The defenders understood the position and knew that if the Saracens took the tower by assault there would no quarter given, they would all be killed, not one would escape. They knew they had no means of defence, nothing to drink, nothing to eat, and that very soon they would be taken by storm or starved out and all put to the sword. They accepted the Saracens' offer, left the castle, threw all their goods out of it, and the Saracens kept their word faithfully and had them taken to safety.[2] Once the Saracens got possession of the Tower of David, they immediately put their miners into it and had the whole fortress taken down and razed to the ground. The size of the enormous stones astonished everyone. The masonry was so strongly mortared with lime, sand and cement, and the stones so firmly bound with the lead and huge bands of cramp-iron which fastened the sections together, that tearing it down was very difficult and needed great force. Thus was destroyed the Tower of David which had stood there ever since it was first built until that day, in times of peace and of war, of heathens and Jews, of Muslim Saracens, of Christians and all kinds of people.[3] This was done in the year of the Incarnation of Our Lord 1239. The pope of Rome at that time was Gregory IX; Frederick was emperor of Rome, king of Germany, of Sicily, Apulia and Calabria and of the Holy Land of Jerusalem; Louis IV[4] was king of France; Henry was king of England;[5] Theobald was king of Navarre and count palatine of Brie and Champagne; Henry was archbishop of Reims.[6]

CHAPTER 22 1239

How Christian forces went to fortify Ascalon

The Christian forces in Acre heard that the unbelievers had tom down the Tower of David and were all very angry at the news. When they had rested briefly and recovered from all their sufferings at sea, it was agreed at the wish of all the leaders that they should appoint a day to meet in the city of Acre. Then all the noblemen who had taken the cross, all the prelates and all the nobles of the land of Syria would assemble and consider how they could best help Christendom. The agreed day came, and all the great men who could do so attended. These were: Theobald, king of Navarre and count of Champagne, and all the French lords we mentioned above except John of Braine, count of Mâcon, who was dead.[1] From the land beyond the sea came the patriarch,[2] the archbishop of Tyre[3] and the bishop of Acre,[4] Count Walter of Jaffa,[5] the grand commander of the Temple and the grand master of the Hospital of Our Lady of the Germans.[6] There were many others, whose names we cannot give.

When all were assembled, many words were spoken, many arguments put forward, but no agreement was reached that day. Orders were given that all should return the following day. Next day when they reassembled, they

agreed, after much discussion, on one thing, that they would all go together and lay siege to the city of Damascus, which was large, rich, full of people, well supplied and contained great wealth. But first of all they would go and make secure a castle which stood where once had been the noble city of Ascalon, before it was destroyed. When they had rebuilt this castle's defences, they would all go together and besiege Damascus. Proclamation was made that everyone must be ready on All Saints' Day.[7] Then in all the streets and lodgings you would have seen men checking their armour, greasing their hauberks, polishing helmets, sharpening swords and daggers, shoeing horses and fitting horse-armour and covers onto their mounts. Everyone made the best preparations he could.

Then on the day after All Saints, the feast of All Souls, the entire force set off and travelled towards Ascalon, using the coast road. Once out in the open, with the companies all arrayed, they formed a huge army. Some said it included at least 4000 knights. Besides these there were so many other troops that the whole country was covered with people and horses, with carts, men, pack animals and other equipment. But there were not nearly enough horses for such a large army. Very many valiant knights and good sergeants went on foot, and hard going they found it, for they were not used to it. Many great lords were only too happy to find a donkey to ride or to load their equipment on. All together they went to Château Pèlerin. Robert Malet and other pilgrims were forced to remain there, as they were too ill to go any further. So they travelled on day after day to the castle of Jaffa, where they stayed four days.

CHAPTER 23 1239

How Count Peter of Brittany went raiding

The sultan of Damascus[1] knew very well what was happening, for his spies had told him that when the Christians had fortified Ascalon, they intended to besiege his noble city of Damascus. He did not fail to provide for this as well as he could, like a man who expected to be besieged at any moment. Food, weapons, engines, and everything that people under siege could need, he collected it all into his city. He was careful to beg the townspeople to do their utmost themselves for their own defence. Then you would have seen the neighbouring towns stripped bare and everything brought into the city – wheat, oats, peas and beans, barley, wine, oil, vinegar, salt meat, iron and steel, and a great deal of livestock. The town was wonderfully well provisioned. Many went into it from the strongholds round about because they feared the Christians and did not dare remain, and they took all their possessions into the city. The sultan of Damascus had sent messages to all his friends requiring them to help him and to provision his city against the Christian army that was on its way. Each one did all he could to help him. Amongst the rest there was an important man, rich and powerful, who got together a great quantity of

oxen, cows, ewes, sheep, camels, buffaloes and other livestock. He took armed men on foot and on horseback with him and went with all his plunder towards Damascus, staying one night in a castle.

While the Christian forces were resting in Jaffa, Peter Mauclerc, count of Brittany, was informed that he could reap great profit in that place. He left the army very privately one evening, taking with him two hundred knights and the other armed men he knew he would need. They had plenty of people with them to guide them, and they travelled all night and in the morning reached a place through which this booty would have to pass. Here he placed part of his force in ambush. Then the count himself and the rest of his men laid in wait at another spot where the convoy would pass, so that if one attack failed, the other must succeed. They made careful arrangements for coming to each other's help if necessary. When the sun had risen, the Turks came out of the castle with all their booty and made straight for the place where the count was waiting. As soon as Count Peter Mauclerc of Brittany saw them, he and his men mounted quickly and rode in good array to attack the unbelievers.

As soon as the emir and the Turks who were with him escorting this booty saw the ranks of Christians, they were sure they meant to attack them and seize their plunder. They discussed what they should do. Some said it would be best to abandon the convoy and move off, fast; perhaps the Christians would concentrate on rounding up the cattle and so they would avoid a conflict. If the Christians did attack, they could put up a better defence if they were not encumbered with livestock. Others said that they had a much stronger force than the Christians and would set a very poor example if they abandoned their convoy without striking a blow. For this reason they recommended moving on, while continuing to protect their plunder. If God was on their side, they would all get safely past, in spite of the handful of Christians ahead of them. The unbelievers could not see all their opponents and had no idea that the count had laid an ambush. They could only see the men with the count and of course supposed that that was his entire force. Their lord the emir, who was a good knight, valiant and courageous, upheld the second opinion, and so they quickly arrayed their men, putting the livestock in the centre and themselves all around it. They placed their archers in the front, to make the first encounter. The emir addressed all his men generally, and spoke to the bravest and most daring, knowing where they were in the ranked companies, and begged and exhorted them to do well and to fight hard. It was a mere nothing, he told them, for so many brave men as they were to kill and cut to pieces the handful of riffraff now approaching them. As the archers drew near the Christians, they attacked at a brisk gallop, shooting thick and fast. But the count of Brittany and our men spurred hard against them and forced them back onto the companies following them, penning them into a narrow place where they could not ride to and fro to shoot or fight. They had to give up their usual spurring technique and fight with swords and maces, which was not nearly so easy for them. But the two sides met in sharp conflict, hitting out with swords

and maces, none holding back. The unbelievers made a united attack upon ours and almost compelled them to turn and run. Now Ralph of Soissons and his men proved their worth: if they had not been there, the count of Brittany would have been taken or killed.

The men lying in ambush knew nothing about this conflict. The count saw that his men were suffering and the unbelievers were doing as they liked with them; then he had a horn sounded. The men in ambush heard it and knew they were needed. They mounted at once and spurred hard towards the battle, charging into the mêlée with such fury that the Turks were all astounded. Hand to hand they fought and it was some time before anyone could tell which side would be victorious. Soon, however, the unbelievers were completely crushed and they turned and fled, not towards Damascus but to the castle where they had spent the night. They never gave a thought to their plunder or their convoy. Our men pursued them and kept so close and so hard on their heels that a good many rode into the castle along with the fugitives. They killed many of the men inside it, captured and bound the rest, and took everything they could find. They rounded up the livestock, all the plunder and all their prisoners, and returned in perfect safety to Jaffa where the army was lying. Great was the delight of the rank and file when they arrived with so much livestock, for there was such a scarcity of food in the army that a man could not get his fill of bread for two pence of Tours. The count gave many of his beasts to the commanders of the host; some were very pleased and others were scornful and jealous because he had won so much plunder. This led them to do things that brought great shame and harm upon Christendom. Poor people were helped for a time, as the count and his companions gave them plenty of meat, which had been in very short supply. This happened in the same year, the month of November, on the Friday after Martinmas.[1]

CHAPTER 24

How many Babylons there are

The mightiest and richest of all the unbelieving princes whose lands marched with those of the Christians in the land of Syria, was the sultan of Babylon in Egypt. But you must know that there are three Babylons. The first is in Mesopotamia; there lay the field of Shinar on which the giants built a tower to reach up to heaven.[2] That is where languages were created. This Babylon stands on the great river, the Euphrates, which flows from the earthly paradise and runs through the land of Mesopotamia, and on another river called Chobar.[3] David spoke of them in the psalms, saying *Super flumina Babilonis.*[4] Nebuchadnezzar was lord of this Babylon, as we find when we read the Bible in the Book of Kings.[5]

The second Babylon is in Egypt. Some say that when the children of Israel were in Egypt it was known as Memphis. These two Babylons lie destroyed

and desolate, no man or woman lives there. In the Babylon in Mesopotamia live huge numbers of serpents, adders and other snakes which dwell in the ruined walls of the tower built by giants, more such creatures than anywhere else on earth.[6]

The third Babylon is sometimes called New Babylon. This has the Cairo as its main castle and stands on the River Nile which flows from the earthly paradise. From New Babylon to Alexandria is three days' journey by land, six by water. From this Babylon to Damietta takes four days. The sultan[7] was lord of this New Babylon, of the whole land of Egypt, of the surrounding country and of a large part of Syria.

CHAPTER 25 1239

How the sultan sent his armies against the Christians

When he heard what a large number of Christians had landed at Acre, he sent competent scouts to discover which way they meant to go. The scouts did so, and returned quickly to their lord and told him that the Christians were going to go and fortify Ascalon. When the sultan heard that, he immediately summoned his troops – footsoldiers and mounted men, knights and crossbowmen in great numbers – and in command of them he put a rich and powerful Turk, a good knight, experienced in war. He was known as Rukn al-Din of the Mountain.[1] The sultan ordered him to lead his whole force in that direction, and to put his castles and strongholds into a state of defence. He provided him with letters commanding all to do as much for him as they would for himself, their own lord, and gave him strict orders to do all the damage he could to these Christians who were coming. Emphatically he commanded Rukn al-Din and all his men to take every chance they had of attacking and killing them all, except for the most valiant, whom he should take alive and send, bound, to Babylon and the Cairo, where he would hold them prisoner in his jail all the rest of their lives.

Some of this happened just as he had planned. Rukn al-Din set off at the head of this great army, and he amply supplied all the sultan's fortresses with armed men, with engines of iron and steel, with timber and stones, with com, flour, oil, salt meat, Greek fire and all that is needed for a castle's defence. He gave strict orders to all local people, telling them they must all be ready, that the moment they heard his messengers or saw the need, or at night should see the fires lit, they must join him at once, well mounted and as well armed as possible. Having made these arrangements, he led his whole army to Gaza, which is not far from Ascalon. There he quartered his men. He had efficient scouts working in the Christian army to discover their plans, and he sent to all the narrow places and difficult passes in the country so as to learn how he could best damage his opponents without unnecessary risk to his own men. He begged and commanded them urgently to let him know as soon as they saw

their chance.

CHAPTER 26 1239

How the count of Bar and his companions went raiding

On the Saturday after Martinmas, which is in November,[2] while the Christian army was lying at Jaffa, the count of Bar and other barons, all great lords, became very jealous and envious of the plunder the count of Brittany had won from the unbelievers. They talked about this together and said that they were just as powerful as the count of Brittany, if not more so, and that it would be a great disgrace, shame and eternal reproach to them if they did not go out too and win booty from the unbelievers. They all engaged resolutely in this enterprise; we will tell you their names in a moment. They had the horses given a late feed of oats and then, after vespers, they called each other out from their places in the host and gathered, well armed and well mounted, outside the encampment on the side towards Ascalon. They were: the count of Bar; Amaury, count of Montfort; Walter, count of Jaffa; the duke of Burgundy and Girard of Aubeville, Robert of Bove, Stephen of Sevinghen, Philip of Nanteuil, Matthew of Marly, Giles of Arsies, Guy Mauvoisin, William Le Bouteillier of Senlis, his brother Ralph[1] and Richard of Beaumont. Six hundred knights at least they were, all well mounted and clad in iron, themselves and their horses down to the very hooves, as well as seventy or more knights bearing banners, and not counting the crossbowmen and sergeants, mounted and on foot, who went with them. There were many more too, who had heard about this expedition and joined it in the hope of plunder. It looked to those who gathered there as if they must certainly accomplish some great thing which would be talked about for evermore. So they would have done, if God had not intervened because of their pride and other sins.

The king of Navarre, the count of Brittany, the masters of the Temple,[2] of St John's Hospital[3] and the Hospital of Our Lady of the Germans[4] and other important leaders whose names we cannot list here, learned that these men had assembled to go out foraging. They knew very well that neither their intentions nor their motives were good, that they were inspired by envy, malice, pride and greed, and so they very much feared they would come to grief. They mounted quickly and rode fast to the place where these men had gathered and found them there, settling their plans. They reproached them vigorously for intending to ride to war like this, when the whole country was in a state of alarm, the unbelievers had their spies out in all the narrow ways and passes and the sultan of Babylon had called up a great host and sent it into this country to defend his land, and it was stationed at Gaza. But if they would wait till next day the whole army should break camp and they would all go to Ascalon together, they would be nearer their enemies there and be better able to learn their dispositions and could then make plans. They told them clearly

that if they rode to war as they intended, they could well be disastrously ambushed by the unbelievers and all of them killed or taken prisoner, to the great shame and harm of Christendom.

The foragers replied forcefully that they would do nothing of the kind, they had come there to fight unbelievers and did not mean to keep putting off any encounter. They would go to Gaza and would rejoin the host next day. The leaders begged them all to wait, but it was useless. When the king of Navarre saw that requests had no effect, he spoke in the name of God, of all Christians and of himself and reminded them of the oath and fealty they had promised him when they put him in command of the host at Acre. He forbade them to move; they must wait till next day when the host would break camp and they would all go together. They refused to wait. The king of Navarre and his companions returned to the host. They discussed matters together and declared that the whole force should move at daybreak and should go straight to Ascalon, following these others. They had it proclaimed throughout the host that all were to move at first light. Next day, before dawn, they broke camp; the commanders arrayed their men and they made straight for Ascalon, some six leagues away. They went in great haste, anxiously enquiring, listening and asking for any word about the men who had left for Gaza the previous evening. But when they reached Ascalon, and before they had all found quarters, they heard the sad and terrible news.

CHAPTER 27 1239

How the Saracens defended themselves against the Christians

When the count of Bar and the other lords whose names we told you earlier were ready to go foraging, as we said above, they travelled together along the coast road towards Gaza. They passed Ascalon and reached the brook which marks the boundary between the kingdom of Jerusalem and Egypt.[1] It was a fine night and very calm. The moon and stars shone and gave plenty of light. When they reached the brook, Count Walter told them that as soon as they crossed it they would be very near Gaza and their enemies, that they should think about what to do next, for if they crossed they would be in great danger; they had already travelled eight or nine leagues, their horses were very tired, and so were they all. A good many recommended returning to Ascalon and waiting there for the main host to join them, as they had pushed on a long way and had not found any enemies or any means of doing them harm. Others disagreed strongly, and said they were going to cross the brook and go on to a wide stretch of pastureland near Gaza. They had been told they would find plenty of animals there, because local people had brought them in for fear of the fighting, as it was a remote place and the beasts would be quite safe there. They never imagined the Christians would dare to cross the brook, not unless the whole host came at once.

In the end all agreed on the worst plan and said they would cross. Count Walter and his men crossed first, and, once over, deployed along the riverbank. They unfurled a white pennon and raised it high so that the rest could see it from a distance and make straight for them. Both horse and foot crossed quickly, and they all reached the far bank. Then they formed up in close array and moved on quietly. Dawn, they saw, had already broken. On they went until they had all entered a narrow place with hills on both sides and nothing but sand underfoot. Their guides told them they were very near Gaza and near the pastureland. When they heard that, they decided to halt there and rest themselves and their horses; they would wait till the livestock had been turned out into the fields and labourers had gone to work. They dismounted. Rich men had cloths spread and sat down to eat, for they had brought plenty of bread, poultry and capons, cooked meat, cheese and fruit, as well as wine in casks and barrels, all loaded onto pack-beasts or in carts. Some ate, others slept, others saw to their horses. Such was their pride and their arrogance that they felt little or no concern about their enemies, into whose land they had thrust so far forward and who were very near them. Then they learned indeed that Our Lord will not be served in this way.

Rukn al-Din, who was at Gaza, knew for certain from his scouts, almost before nightfall, that these men were coming to look for plunder, that they would all be extremely tired, both men and horses, before they got that far, and so he would be able to do as he liked with them. He was sure that if he could defeat and crush these men, the main Christian army would be seriously weakened. He at once had a big fire lit on top of the highest of the nearby hills and sent messengers to every place from which he knew his men could see the fire, to summon and hasten them, and to tell them to come, well armed, and join him. The unbelievers of the district, thoroughly familiar with this system, no sooner saw this large fire burning on the hilltop than they knew there was an emergency near Gaza where the fire was burning, and that it was lit to summon them. They ran at once to arms, passing the summons on from one to another, and set out immediately on foot and on horseback. As they went, they met the messengers, who encouraged them to hurry and exhorted them to do the work well. Very soon the whole district was covered with streams of men pouring in to join Rukn al-Din. Before the sun was up he had more men than he needed. His scouts came and went, keeping a constant watch on the valley our men had entered, as they wanted to know what state they were in, how many they were, and what they were doing. The unbelievers could scarcely believe the danger they had thrust themselves into.

When Rukn al-Din knew exactly how matters stood and had his troops assembled, he quickly got them armed and arrayed. The crossbowmen, archers, javelin-men and slingers he ordered up onto the hillsides; they were to surround our men on all sides, to shoot and sling stones vigorously so as to kill and shatter both men and horses. This would be easy, they said, for ours would never be able to spur against them up the hillsides. He ordered his cavalry to

station themselves within the narrow pass where our men were, so that they would have no way of getting out into a wider space; as our men had placed themselves, they were as if in a fortress which could only be attacked from the front or the rear. When Rukn al-Din had issued his orders, each man went to his post. Then they came on at a great pace, with such a noise of drums, timbrels, tabors, horns, of men shouting and horses neighing that nothing else could be heard. A terrifying sound that is to hear, for those who are not used to it.

CHAPTER 28 1239

How the count of Bar and his companions were defeated

Count Walter of Jaffa saw them first, and told the others. They ran to arms at once, mounted, and gathered to discuss what they should do. There was no agreement among them. Count Walter and the duke of Burgundy said they should retreat, should lead their troops back and certainly not wait and fight, as they were in a place where both men and horses would be treading up to their knees in sand; that for each man of theirs there were fourteen or more attacking, for the whole country was swarming with Turks and Saracens. They gave several other strong reasons for turning back. The counts of Bar and Montfort and most of the other leaders said they should fight; they would not be able to retreat even if they tried to do so, as the Turks were too near. If by any chance those on horseback escaped, all those on foot would be killed or taken. Count Walter of Jaffa and the duke of Burgundy said they had no intention of destroying themselves and their men, so they began to retreat and set off fast towards Ascalon. When the others saw that, they begged them to tell the king of Navarre and the main army to come to their help as quickly as they could, for they were all in danger of destruction. They replied that they would be glad to do so, but that it would be better if they all went back safe and sound together instead of courting defeat. Then the duke of Burgundy and Count Walter of Jaffa withdrew.

The count of Bar, the count of Montfort and the others who remained put themselves into great danger. They re-ordered their troops, both horse and foot; and now the unbelievers on the hillsides drew near enough to shoot and fling at them. They hurled rocks, slung stones, shot bolts and arrows; no storm of rain, no hail could have made the sky darker. Great was the uproar among the Christians, who suffered many injuries and lost many horses killed. As soon as the leaders saw this, they ordered their archers and crossbowmen to shoot, and they did so. Soon after that the unbelievers drew back for fear of the crossbow bolts. Many on both sides were killed in this attack. Neither Rukn al-Din and his companions in the gorge nor those on the hillsides dared approach our men as long as their bolts lasted. But most unfortunately these soon ran out, as they had not brought enough. Once they were all shot off, the

unbelievers saw it, rushed in from all sides and began to hurl and shoot a dense rain of missiles at our men. When the leaders saw this happening, they spurred their horses and all charged together against Rukn al-Din. The unbelievers on foot, guarding these narrows, received them fiercely. There was a bitter and strenuous conflict. Great blows were struck with swords, broadswords and maces, no one spared his opponent. For some time the unbelievers stood firm, as the pass was narrow and our Christians had difficulty getting at them, but in the end they were vigorously thrust back and our Christians occupied this narrow place by force, driving out the Saracens, who fled, angry and sorrowful. Once ours were in these narrows, the unbelievers on the hillsides could not hurt them. They could well have stayed there some time, if their pride and arrogance had not led them to charge in pursuit of the unbelievers who were pretending to run away.

When Rukn al-Din saw our men in that strong place, he very much feared they would hold out there and defend it until help reached them. He summoned his men at once and told them to make a feint of running away, as our Christians were so proud and so arrogant that when they saw them run, they would pursue them at a great rate, and would leave the narrow gorge. Rukn al-Din sent orders at once to his men on the hillsides, telling them that as soon as our men left that place, they should move in and occupy it so that ours could not get back into it. When Rukn al-Din had given his orders, as you have heard, he and his whole company took to their heels and appeared to flee. When ours saw this, they thought they had won a decisive victory and went rushing out of the gorge. This proved to be a great mistake. As soon as the men on the hillside saw them leave the pass, they occupied it, so that ours could not get back in. When Rukn al-Din saw our men well out of the place and pursuing him, he turned his men and his whole force to meet them. And the other Saracens, the ones who came down from the hills, were behind them. Now our men were completely surrounded and as it were hemmed in by the unbelievers. Then they first began to regret that they had been so sure of themselves, but their regret came too late. Those few who could do so rallied to their own companies along various tracks. Tenderly, kindly, the count of Bar and the count of Montfort urged them to do well and to sell their lives dearly, for there was no question of escape.

The battle began, arduous, fierce and bloody. Our men gave mighty blows and did great deeds. When the Turks, who were using Turkish bows, had shot very many arrows and saw that our men and their horses were injured and wounded, they took their maces, drew their swords and attacked on every side. They had our men at a great disadvantage, for ours were so few. They stood firm as long as they were able. In the end they could not withstand such numbers; as the enemy attacked down the hillsides, they ran, utterly defeated. The count of Bar, the count of Montfort, a few knights and other men who did not wish to flee, remained on the field. These did wonders, and cut great clearings among the Saracens surrounding them. No one dared go near them,

but they shot and flung at them and hurled lances as if at a target. At last they were exhausted and the Saracens rushed them from every side. They were all killed or taken.

In this battle the count of Bar was taken or killed, it is not known which; the count of Montfort was taken; Philip of Nanteuil and Giles of Arsies, Le Bouteillier of Senlis, Stephen of Charny, Peter of Valeni and many others whose names I cannot list were bound fast and taken captive to Egypt, to Damietta and to the Cairo and Babylon and to many other places in that land. Grievously were they mocked and jeered at in the good towns of the unbelievers which they entered. The unbelievers took horse-droppings and the dung of other animals and put it into censers and censed them. Much vile and shameful treatment they received as they went along the streets. All the unbelievers, great and small, went running from every side to see them.

CHAPTER 29 1239

How they were not rescued

The king of Navarre and the main army, stationed near Ascalon, heard that their men who had gone out foraging were in great need of help. All of them ran to arms and mounted, leaving part of their force to guard the encampment. The rest ordered their ranks and rode in good array towards Gaza. The commander and brothers of the Hospital of Our Lady of the Germans never waited for the rest but ran to arms, to horse, and galloped at great speed towards the conflict. But they did not arrive in time. Ours had already been defeated and were running – those that could – as fast as possible towards the army. The German brothers were a great help to these, for as soon as the Saracens chasing them saw this strong force of Christians heading for them at full gallop, they did not dare wait but turned and fled very fast back to the other great companies of Saracens, who were tying up the Christians they had captured in the battle. The brothers caught them up, killed and overthrew them and did the worst they could to them, but were quite unable to recover the prisoners. All along that road they saw sights which much distressed them – Christians stripped of their armour, cut to pieces, lying naked and dead, for the Saracens had carried off the plunder. Some they found who were not yet dead. One of these was my lord Anseau de l'Ile;, whom they found lying naked, stripped bare and badly wounded. He and the others were carried back on the knights' shields.

When the king of Navarre and the main army with him had ridden far enough and seen for themselves that the others were defeated, dead and taken captive, they discussed what they should do. They asked the Templars, the Hospitallers and the local people who were with them what they advised. They answered that the Saracens had won the battle and were holding the Christians bound and captive; that they were in their land, their country, near

their fortresses and strongholds, which would make them prouder and more arrogant; that if they saw the Christian host approaching them, they would kill all their Christian prisoners; then they would go and sit inside their fortresses. In this way all the valiant men taken in the battle, who might be recovered if they were held prisoner, would be lost. The king of Navarre and the leaders listened to this, but proceeded to disagree with each other. The relatives of the captured men said it would be wrong for the host not to advance, because the prisoners could very well be rescued. Others strongly disagreed and said that if the host did advance, the Saracens would kill the prisoners. After long discussion they all agreed upon withdrawal. So the whole host put itself in motion, and they returned to their quarters at Ascalon.

Great was the outcry, great the shouting, and men said that now the host of Christendom was powerless, as all its good knights were killed or in prison. This sad event occurred in the year and month we said, on the Sunday after Martinmas, which is in November.[1]

CHAPTER 30 1239

Of the songs made in Babylon by Philip of Nanteuil

Philip of Nantueil was taken captive to Babylon with the others and while there he wrote several songs. One of these he sent to the Christian army, and we shall recite it now for those who would like to hear it:[1]

In song I'll mourn
to ease my grief
for Montfort, noble count,
who bore his fame so well.
He came to Syria –
sad loss to France! –
there to make war.
But soon his warfare ceased
for from his first assault
God allowed no return.

Ah France, admired and loved,
now all your joy is turned
to endless tears.
Always in future now,
silent, you'll grieve.
This was the tragedy:
no sooner did they come
than both your counts were lost.

Ah count of Bar, your loss

strikes cruelly at France.
When Frenchmen hear the news
how they will grieve!
Poor France, stripped of her sons,
such brave and valiant knights!
Accursed the day
that changed these noble men
to slaves and prisoners!

If the Hospitallers,
Templars and brother knights
had shown our men the way,
had ridden as they should,
then all our chivalry
would not in prison lie,
nor Saracens still live.
But this they did not do.
Great was the error here,
some would say treachery.

My song, made up of grief,
of grief and pity mixed,
go and find Pity, beg
for God and friendship's sake,
she run to find the host,
tell them, make sure they know,
that they must not break faith!
Make them put out their strength
and get our people back,
by warfare or by wealth.

CHAPTER 31 1239–40

How the Christian army returned directly to Acre

The king of Navarre and the other leaders certainly did not mean to repair the defences of Ascalon at that time, nor to stay in that neighbourhood. Orders were proclaimed throughout the host: all were to move next day, early. This was done; next morning they broke camp, marshalled their forces and returned to Jaffa From Jaffa they went by short stages to Acre. At every place they came to there were tears and lamentations because such a strong force of Christians was returning without having achieved anything for God's love or for Christendom against the enemies of the faith. Once back at Acre, they remained there some time. Then they all went away together, travelling by

way of the cities and good towns held by the Christians in that country, that is to say, by Tyre, Beirut, Tripoli and Tortosa and other good towns we cannot name. It was a very large force indeed, for when they were all on the move, they covered the whole country. Many people said they could have achieved most of what they wanted in the land, if it had not been for the leaders' pride, jealousy and other sins. They said too that the leaders constantly received envoys from the princes of the unbelievers, who gave them lavish retainers and payments. Preachers speaking in the host often said things which very much displeased the commanders.

There was a Minorite in the army, Brother William,[1] the pope's confessor, legate to the host, who ended many of his sermons with the words:

'For God's sake, good people, pray to Our Lord, beg him to give the commanders of this host their hearts back, for you can be sure they have lost them through their sins! Such a huge force of Christians ought to be able to attack the unbelievers in any place at all, if they had God on their side.' Some of the Christians wrote several songs about this but we shall put just one in our book:

There is no point, say what you will,
in happiness or joy,
when idle barons take their ease
at war in Syria.
As yet they've not made one assault
on castle, city, town;
a foolish raid, ill-planned, that's all,
which killed the count of Bar.

If they'd but show some energy,
how quickly things would change!
But each man's racked with arrogance,
and jealous of the next.
If God does not correct this pride,
their labours will be lost,
all their exertions useless prove,
the pilgrims' journey vain.

Shameful will be the going back,
and Holy Church disgraced,
for nothing so far have they done
of glory or renown.
No hero's courage have they shown,
there's no such news as that.
Let God correct this arrogance,
or we are all condemned.

How great and glorious a throng
set off from France, the flower,
or so it seemed, of chivalry,
best in the world, all said.
Young gentlemen, poor vavassors,
not one of them's to blame.
This long delay is hard on men
who've left their lands in pawn.

The great lords show no kindness, give
no sort of help or aid
to such when all their money's gone.
These don't deserve to die!
If ever they come home again,
who'll blame them? None but fools!
Imprisoned lords, all over France
her people pray for you!

So eager in your arrogance
to show off all your strength,
pig-headed, stupid, brave, you rode
outstripping all support.
Now Turkish masters hold you fast
and Mary's son must mourn.
Great will the grief and sorrow be
if God loose not your bonds.

CHAPTER 32 1240

Of the truce between the Christians and the king of Damascus

When the king of Navarre and the host of Christendom had spent some time at Tripoli with the prince of Antioch,[1] who treated them during their stay with great honour and courtesy, they took leave of the prince and went back to Acre. From there they went straight to the Springs of Saffuriya, where they encamped. The sultans of Damascus and Kerak[2] very much feared that our forces intended to attack them. Each of them had his own army with him to protect his lands. These sultans sent envoys to the king of Navarre and the leaders of the host to propose a truce. They offered excellent terms and the truce was agreed by both sides. Among the other benefits it brought the Christians was the sultan's restoration to them of a castle known as Beaufort; this had previously been held by the lord of Sidon.[3] When the sultan of Damascus sent his men there to hand the castle over to the lord of Sidon, the sultan's garrison refused to surrender it and said they were not going to leave.

They even said openly that if the sultan wanted to surrender such a castle to those pigs, dogs, Christians, unbelievers and infidels who did not believe in God, without a blow being struck, then he himself did not faithfully believe in Muhammad's law.

The sultan was informed. He went at once with his army and laid siege to the castle. Neither for him nor for any messenger he sent would the men inside the castle surrender it, nor would they let him enter it. The sultan immediately sent for his siege engines from Damascus. When they arrived he promptly had them set up all round the castle and began an assault from every side, using the engines to hurl both large and small stones. Very soon the Turks inside the castle saw that they could not hold it long and that they could expect no help from any quarter. For these reasons they held a parley with the sultan and told him that they would surrender the castle to him if he would promise them their lives. The sultan interrupted them at once and said that he would certainly not make any agreement with them; either they would surrender the castle and themselves to his good pleasure or he would take them by storm, whoever might be sorry. When they heard that, they were very much afraid that one day soon the sultan would attack with such force as to take them by assault and have them all put to a painful death. Therefore they went to him and submitted entirely to his will. He at once put them all under arrest. Some he had drawn to the gibbet and hanged, others banished from his land, and from others he took all they possessed. And there were some whose heads he had shaved, except the beard, and others were half-shaved, not more. He could not have humiliated them more, the Saracens said, or done them worse shame. When the sultan had done all this, he surrendered the castle to the lord of Sidon,[1] who garrisoned and equipped it with all the weapons, victuals and other things necessary.

CHAPTER 33 1240

How the Christians repaired the defences of Ascalon

When the king of Navarre and the army of Christendom had secured this truce, they went all together to Ascalon. Here they found ample supplies of stone and building material, for the noble city of Ascalon had been a very great place. They began to repair one of its castles and to build good towers and dig good ditches. Each individual was glad to help in the work, and all could see that it was well done and very strong.

Then they began to talk and say that it would be a good thing if some plan could be made for setting free the Christians captured at Gaza. Envoys from the sultan of Damascus were then present in the army, and they told the leaders in their lord's name that if they would stay in the country and make war on the sultan of Babylon, their lord would join them and would bring his own men, weapons and victuals to their assistance. This was readily agreed to

by the Templars, Hospitallers and all the Christians of the land of Syria. They said still further that if the others would agree to go and besiege some city in Egypt, whether Damietta, Babylon, the Cairo, or any other city that should bring profit and honour to Christendom, they would have great quantities of food brought to the army, it should be richly and unfailingly supplied. The sultan of Damascus promised faithfully to do all these things. The king of Navarre and the other lords from France who were present discussed this together and absolutely refused to agree. And while these plans were being discussed the king of Navarre went off with many of his people to Jerusalem, to Our Lord's holy Sepulchre and the other holy places there. After that they returned to the castle that was being repaired at Ascalon.

CHAPTER 34 1240

Of the truce which the king of Navarre made with the sultan of Babylon

It was not long before the king of Navarre made a truce with the sultan of Babylon, the agreement being that Rukn al-Din and his men would return all the Christians he had taken at Gaza. When the men of the army heard this, they were all furiously angry. They said openly that no truce should be made so soon, not until the Christians killed and taken at Gaza had been thoroughly avenged by strong and vigorous attack. When the Templars, Hospitallers and Christians of the land heard about these things, they openly opposed the truce, set themselves clearly apart and said they had no intention of entering into a truce with the sultan of Babylon. Then throughout the host there was great hostility towards the king of Navarre. He saw clearly how much the men of the army disliked him, and that they did not obey his orders, as they had promised to do at the beginning, when he landed in Syria He seriously expected they would shame or physically injure him, and one evening very privately when the army was asleep he went aboard ship and sailed for France.[1] When the Christians he had left behind learned of this, they all set off individually for home and got themselves back to France as best they could, each to his own district and his own land. The duke of Burgundy said he would not leave until Ascalon castle had been well and thoroughly repaired, well enough for Christendom to be able to hold it, and he kept his word, staying another full year.

CHAPTER 35 1240

How the prisoners were set free

The sultan of Babylon kept faithfully to the agreement he had made with the king of Navarre. He released all the prisoners he was holding, the count of Montfort, Philip of Nanteuil and all the others, rich and poor. The sultan's

envoys accompanied the men whom the king of Navarre sent for this purpose to all the good towns of Egypt, and in all these places they were set free. These men insistently asked and searched for the count of Bar but could never hear any news of him. Some people said that Bedouins had watched the battle and after witnessing the Christians' defeat had rushed in to gather plunder, as they usually did, and that they had taken the count of Bar along with their other booty. Later, when they left the area and made camp, they tethered him to a post, where he was overcome by a flux and diarrhoea, of which he died. So it was said by some, but whatever the facts were, no one ever knew what became of him. All the other prisoners held by the sultan were sought out and set free without any difficulties being made.

CHAPTER 36 1240

How Earl Richard went to the Holy Land

Richard, brother of Henry, king of England, who was a great and powerful prince in the realm of England, had taken the cross, and many English took it with him. When the French took the cross, Richard set off with all his men and travelled straight through France and on to Marseille. There he and all his people went aboard ships and vessels and put out to sea, and they landed without delay at Acre.[1] They stayed a while at Acre and then, after the others had gone, they all took the road for Ascalon. Very well armed, they were, and well mounted, a numerous force. Reaching Ascalon, they found the duke of Burgundy and many local men there; these were protecting the workmen so that the Saracens should not prevent the castle being rebuilt or demolish the new work. Richard had no intention of breaking the truce which the king of Navarre had made with the Saracens, but he put his men hard to work on repairing the castle and spent a large part of his wealth on it. He and the duke of Burgundy stayed there until the castle was finished, made secure, and well provided with everything needed to endure a siege – men-at-arms, engines, food and other things.[2] After that they made their pilgrimage to the holy city of Jerusalem and to all the other holy places in the land of Outremer that they could go to. Then they left to go safely back to their own lands and their own countries. Thus all these many men did almost nothing in the Holy Land that was of any use, and yet when they first set out to go there, everyone said they would bring great gain and great honour to God and to Christendom. These things happened 1240 years after the Incarnation of Our Lord, and the pope, emperor and king were those whom we named to you earlier.

CHAPTER 37 1240–45

How the emperor Frederick was condemned

While these things were happening in Syria, there was great enmity between Pope Gregory and the emperor Frederick. The pope excommunicated him and had the sentence proclaimed throughout Christendom. Frederick harassed the pope, and not only him but all kinds of clergy and religious and any who supported them. In his land, clerks were beaten, imprisoned, hanged and slaughtered. One of the Minorites was burnt there, another skinned, and a bishop was drawn to the gallows and hanged. He banished bishops and archbishops from his land, and clerks, abbots and religious too. He had crosses, censers and chalices taken out of churches, as well as palls and other ornaments of Holy Church and gave them to those who helped him make war on Holy Church. He refused absolutely to allow the presence of any bishop, archbishop or other prelate anywhere in his land, unless they were his own familiar friends. Many were the churches in his land which stood empty, the clerks and priests who ought to do God's service all driven out. Very many churches were knocked down and demolished. Fifty or more bishoprics had neither bishop nor archbishop, so that the whole land was given into the hands of wicked men, free to work evil, for there was no one to rebuke them or preach the word of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Clerks and religious were so burdened with taxes and heavy exactions that they could scarcely get food to eat. Every month they had to pay a large sum towards the building of the emperor's castles and strongholds. Clerks were compelled by force to plead before the emperor's regents, and they had to give pledges of battle and had to fight if they were appealed, or if they appealed others. He permitted Minorites in his land for some time, but then drove them all out. When his regents took the ornaments out of some church and the clergy bought them back and paid the ransom, then these men would come back after the items were redeemed and take them again, so that they lost both their money and their ornaments. He took everything he could from the Church of Rome. He refused to let anyone go to Rome, nor could anyone return from there except by his special permission. He kept no faith or any oath he had made with Holy Church. He gave his daughter to Vatatzes,[1] the greatest of the Griffon princes, who was excommunicate, cut off from Holy Church. He had the prettiest Christian girls taken and sent them to the sultan of Babylon and to other unbelieving princes who were his friends, and they did as much for him. No agreement, no pact that he made with Holy Church did he ever keep.

The Holy Land beyond the sea belonged to his son Conrad, and Frederick had even had himself crowned king there,[2] but he put forward no plan by which it might be freed from the unbelievers and brought into the service of Our Lord Jesus Christ. All his wars were attacks upon Holy Church. He laid siege to the cities and castles belonging to the pope and Holy Church, and when he was able to capture their defenders, he had them drawn to execution, hanged and put to a cruel death. He took numerous Saracens about with him, who were happy to kill Christians as viciously as they could. When they entered any of the good towns, they would stable their horses in the churches

and set up brothels and bawdy-houses in them quite unchecked. We cannot possibly describe all the atrocities Frederick did and permitted, nor tell you the humiliation in which he kept Holy Church, which was all but lost and destroyed under Frederick's rule.

The pope decided to seek advice from the prelates of Holy Church and he summoned a great council to meet in Rome. The prelates who were summoned set off and travelled safely through the kingdom of France and through the other lands as far as Genoa, which is on the coast. Having reached there, they did not dare go any further by land for fear of Frederick, and they boarded several vessels so as to go to Rome by sea. Frederick had ordered his son, the king of Sardinia,[1] to prepare a large number of war galleys. These were to keep guard and make sure that none of those attending the council should escape; all must be killed or captured. The prelates and clergy sailed on; Frederick's men in the galleys attacked them, killed some, drowned others and took others prisoner. Some escaped, for they saw the attack coming before the others did and fled back towards harbour, but the galleys sped after them. When Frederick had the prelates and clergy in front of him, as well as two Roman cardinals captured with the rest (legates to France and to England returning for the council), he subjected them to harsh and wretched imprisonment.[2] He had them paraded from town to town, from prison to prison, put on display, mocked, insulted, jeered at and humiliated in various ways. Many of them died of hunger and thirst, of heat or cold and other forms of suffering.

Soon after these events came the death of Pope Gregory IX, a good and energetic prelate.[3] The Church of Rome was then without a pope for some time, after which the cardinals assembled and elected an old man, whom they called Celestine.[4] When he became pope he renewed and confirmed all the sentences Pope Gregory had pronounced against the emperor Frederick. He lived for some 28 days and then died. After him the Church had no pope for a long time. Then laymen who supported Frederick said that the clergy had been caught in a fine trap and would never have a pope again. Even the Jews said that the prophecy of Daniel was fulfilled, that 'when the Holy of Holies comes, the unction shall fail'.[5] Some were prepared to wager large sums that Christians would never have a pope again and that now the unction Daniel spoke of had failed, the Holy of Holies would soon come, or had already come in some part of the world. Christians themselves said many offensive things about the clergy, and that Frederick was manipulating them in such a way that they would never again have a pope and would be just the same as laymen.

When the Church of Rome had been without a pope for a long time, the cardinals assembled and elected a valiant man whom they called Innocent IV.[1] When he became pope he saw that it was not safe for him to stay in Rome and that Christians could not go to him there because Frederick had a watch kept on all land and sea routes so that no one could pass. Innocent had a galley prepared, went aboard secretly at night and fled to Genoa. Once there, he had no anxiety about Frederick, for the men of that city supported the Church and

the most powerful were his kinsmen. The cardinals and his people joined him there secretly, running many risks to do so, but at all events they escaped them. Now the pope fell ill and lay sick and at death's door in Genoa for a long time. He recovered, regained his full health and strength, and went to Lyon on the Rhone, taking with him his cardinals and an excellent company, as well as a great number of other men whose attendance Frederick could not prevent. At Lyon the pope summoned a great council of the kings, prelates, nobles and clergy of Christendom, who were all to go to him or send duly empowered procurators. When they were assembled there, the pope excommunicated Frederick and had recorded in their presence all the acts of sacrilege and treachery the emperor had daily committed against Holy Church and against Christendom. By common accord in full and solemn council Frederick was deposed from all authority as king and emperor.[2] In full council the pope solemnly excommunicated both Frederick and all in general who should offer him honour, obedience or respect as king or emperor. He also absolved all men and women who had sworn him faith, oath or fealty. He commanded the electors to elect another man. After the events I have recorded for you, the council dispersed.

CHAPTER 38 1246–47

How the landgrave was elected and died

The electors met in Germany and chose a very great and powerful man, Henry of Germany of Thuringia.[3] The people of Aix-la-Chapelle[4] refused to let him be crowned in their town because they favoured Frederick and his son, Conrad. When Henry was king-elect of Germany, Conrad attacked him in great strength. King Henry opposed him with all his forces. They fought a major battle, and in the end Conrad was heavily defeated, losing 700 or more knights whom King Henry and his troops took prisoner, as well as a large number of important men, and this seriously reduced Conrad's power. Not long after this battle King Henry died without having been crowned.

CHAPTER 39 1247–48

How the count of Holland was crowned at Aix

The electors met and chose the count of Holland[1] as king of Germany. The people of Aix-la-Chapelle would not let him be crowned there, any more than they had the other man. The new king of Germany informed the pope of this, and he sent a cardinal called Master Pietro Capoccio[2] into that country and made him legate of the kingdom of Germany.

When the legate arrived there, he had the cross preached everywhere and got people to fasten crosses to the front of their shoulders. Many people

throughout the country took the cross, and when the new season came the new king summoned all his forces and the legate all his crusaders and they went and laid siege to Aix-la-Chapelle.

They stayed there a long time. Many were killed on one side and on the other. Below the town the besiegers built an embankment, broad and high, to check the course of the river and streams. None of the rivers could flow away but were all held back by this embankment. This mass of water swelled and became very deep, and then it spilled into the town and poured all along the streets and into the houses and cellars. This caused much damage and great alarm, for it carried up all the sewage from stables and private houses and elsewhere, so that whole place stank. The townspeople were in serious difficulties for a long time. After the siege had lasted half a year, the defenders realised that they were not going to get any help from Frederick. They went out and surrendered the town about seven days before All Saints. The new king had the embankment cut and the town drained, and it was then well and thoroughly cleansed. He entered it and was crowned with joy, festivity and great solemnity on All Saints' Day. This was done in the year of the Incarnation of Our Lord 1247.[3]

CHAPTER 40

Of the Tartars and the Khwarazmians

We shall speak again now about the Holy Land beyond the sea, but shall begin a little further back. Before the events occurred which we have just described, it happened that in parts of the East various kinds of people who were later called Tartars left their own lands, saying that this was at God's command.[1] They conquered all the lands they came to and destroyed all sorts of peoples – heathens, Muslims, Jews and Christians – without distinction. They conquered every land they entered because there were so very many of them, a whole variety of kinds of people, more than anyone could credit. They believed in nothing. In less than forty years they conquered all the territories between their own land and Persia, which is at least a four months' journey. So many people did they slaughter, heathen Muslims more than others, that it was hard to believe it was happening, it all seemed a fable. Amongst others they destroyed the kingdom of Persia. Out of that land they drove another sort of people who were called Khwarazmians[2] and belonged to Babylon and the law of Muhammad. These could not find any nation of their own law who would receive them, because of their great wickedness and great cruelties, and they travelled on till they came to the sultan of Babylon. The sultan refused to give them a home in his own land, but granted them the holy city of Jerusalem and the holy Promised Land where Christians were living. He urged and ordered them to go there and promised them faithfully that if they did, he would support and help them with all his power.

How the Christians were then heavily defeated by the Saracens

The Khwarazmians heard these things and then by agreement with the sultan they took their wives and children, their armed companies and fighting equipment, and entered the Holy Land. Very many of them were armed, both horsemen and on foot. They burst suddenly into the Christians' land by Safed and Tiberias, and the Christians had heard nothing of their coming. Then they overran and plundered the land. They made several strong attacks on the holy city of Jerusalem, where at this time the ramparts were few and lacked any crenellation.

When the patriarch[3] and the other good men of the land learned these facts, they discussed the situation and all agreed strongly that they could not fight the Khwarazmians on their own, being so few in number compared with the invaders. They decided unanimously to send to the sultan of Damascus and the sultan of Horns,[4] who were bound to the Christians by truces promising them aid and defence of Christian-held lands against all kinds of people of their own law, to ask them to come and help the Christians against the Khwarazmians who had entered their land. Both these sultans promised upon oath to come and help them.

While the Christians and the two sultans were preparing to drive the Khwarazmians out of their lands, or to fight them if they dared wait to be attacked, the Christians in Jerusalem were very much afraid that the Khwarazmians, who were making repeated assaults on the city, would force an entry and cut them all to pieces. For this reason a good six thousand or more assembled, both men and women, and they left the city and tried to make their way through the mountains to Christian-held lands. They relied confidently on the truce granted to the Christians by the sultan of Kerak, whom they called *Lenas*,[1] and the unbelievers of the whole land. When the unbelievers saw them, they kept no faith, no oath, no truce they had made with the Christians, but gathered from all sides and attacked them. Some they killed and others they took away, bound, and sold them in markets and towns. Some managed to get away, but they escaped one danger only to run into another, for the Khwarazmians encountered them on the Ramla plain where they attacked and massacred them. In this way all those men and women who left Jerusalem were lost, for no more than 300 reached Christendom, and these were in a pitiable condition.

After that the Khwarazmians entered Jerusalem, which stood quite empty. In the church of the Sepulchre they found Christians who had refused to leave with the others. These they disembowelled before the Sepulchre of Our Lord, and they beheaded the priests who were vested and singing mass at the altars. Then they threw down the marble framework that enclosed the Sepulchre of Our Lord and took the carved columns that stood in front of it and sent them

to Muhammad at Mecca as a sign of victory. And for a disgrace and dishonour to Christians, they demolished the tombs of the kings and took the kings' bones and scattered them about.[2] In different ways they soiled and made filthy the holy places, not only in the church of the Sepulchre but in all the holy places of the city and in all the Holy Land itself, where they committed far more acts of shame, filth and destruction against Jesus Christ and the holy places and Christendom than all the unbelievers who had been in the land had ever done in peace or war.

When the sultans of Damascus and of Horns arrived with all their forces, and the whole strength of Christendom in the land had joined them, they set off together in arms to do battle with the Khwarazmians, moving in ordered battalions along the coast road. Learning this, the Khwarazmians retreated and established themselves at Gaza. The sultan of Babylon sent strong reinforcements to them there, both horse and foot, to assist them against the Christians.

As the hosts of Christendom approached Gaza, they saw the Khwarazmians and the men of Babylon arrayed in their companies ready for battle. The Christians placed their own squadrons in such a way that the sultans of Damascus and of Horns would have to fight first. The armies drew near and clashed, Saracens against Saracens. Neither side spared the other in the least, just as if they had not been followers of the same law. They struck many fine blows and did great deeds of prowess, both the men of Damascus and of Horns, but they lost many killed and captured, and were defeated and made prisoner. This left the Christians standing alone on the field of battle, and they were very few compared with their enemies. Vigorously the two forces attacked each other; very sharp and cruel was the encounter. It was hard to believe that so few could fight so well against so many unbelievers. Then the Khwarazmians and the men of Babylon made a joint attack and at last ours could not stand against such overwhelming numbers.[1]

In this defeat the brothers of the Temple lost all but thirty-six Templars, the Hospitallers all but twenty-six, and the brothers of the Hospital of Our Lady of the Germans all but three. All the others were either taken or killed, and almost all the great lords were captured in the battle. Nearly all the crossbowmen and footsoldiers were lost. The patriarch, the constable of Acre,[2] Philip of Montfort[3] and others who survived the battle retreated into the new castle at Ascalon. The master of the Hospital[4] and Count Walter of Brienne and the other captives were taken into Egypt, to the city of Babylon. The patriarch and the others who had escaped and taken refuge in the new castle at Ascalon returned along the coast road to Acre, weeping, shouting and crying as they went, so that it was a grief to hear them.

After this victory over the Christians the Khwarazmians, with great pride and arrogance, encamped on the Acre plain, only a league away from the city, and they seized and shared out among themselves all the land the Christians used to hold, so that the Christians now had nothing but the castles.

The army of the sultan of Babylon which had come to help the Khwarazmians sent even more men than before, and they all went together and laid siege to the new castle of Ascalon. Vigorously did its guardians defend it, and long did they hold it against their enemies. The siege lasted nearly two years. The defenders were very few, and of those many were wounded. They saw that they could expect no help from the Christians of the land, who all had enough to do defending their own strongholds. When they felt sure they could not hold the castle any longer, battered and damaged in many places as it was, they put to sea at night – those that still lived, for many had been killed in the assaults. They escaped as best they could and made their way to Christian territory. And when the Saracens saw what had happened, they entered the castle, demolished and razed it to the ground.[5]

The patriarch and other survivors of the battle did not know what to do. They feared that the castles they were holding would be lost one by one and for ever. Then they did all they could and sent word to the king of Cyprus and to the prince of Antioch telling them of the defeat they and Christendom had suffered and asking them to send men to help defend them. They also sent the bishop of Beirut[1] to take solemn messages to the pope and to the kings of France and England and to the other nobles and to the prelates of Holy Church to tell them these things. They emphasised that if swift decisions were not taken about the Holy Land, it would soon be completely lost.

In the middle of winter these good men put to sea. Christendom's urgent need led them to undergo the risk of a sea voyage in winter, and great were the dangers, the distress and suffering they encountered at sea. However, they landed on the other side and made their reports to the pope and the king of France and the others to whom they were sent. Little or no help or support did they receive except from the king of France and Frenchmen. These gave them help in the way and on the terms that you will hear next. Christendom suffered these terrible events in the year of the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ 1244. The defeat took place in the month of October, on the eve of the feast day of St Luke the Evangelist.[2]

CHAPTER 42 1244–48

How King Louis, fourth of the line of Hugh Capet, went across the sea

In the same year and at the same time and season that these terrible events were occurring in the Holy Land beyond the sea, a serious illness struck the good and valiant Louis, king of France, the fourth of that name of the descendants of Hugh Capet. The illness caused him great distress, and it grew worse. He made his confession and received communion and all the rites of Holy Church proper for a good Christian. He made his will, put his affairs in order, and earnestly begged his brothers to take care of his wife and his children, who were very young and helpless. When he had done all this, the

illness racked him so severely that everyone thought he had died. Then they all began cry out in bitter grief and lamentation, and not only those with him but all the people of Pontoise where he then was, making such an outcry that no Christian born of a woman, however hard-hearted, could have failed to be moved by it.

When the king had lain speechless a long time, he returned from death to life, as it pleased God he should do. Having returned, he told the bishop of Paris[3] who was present to give him the cross of the Holy Land. The bishop and others were astonished to hear him speak, for they were sure he had died and left this world. Then the bishop gave him the cross and the king took it and immediately ordered that it should be attached to his clothing. His brother, the count of Artois, and the other great men present took the cross at once.[1]

It was not long before the king made a full recovery and became quite fit and well. He sent to the pope of Rome to ask him to send a legate to France to preach the crusade to the French people and to advise him about his own pilgrimage. Then the pope sent as legate into France Master Odo of Châteauroux, who was bishop of Tusculum and a cardinal of the Church of Rome. When he arrived and preached the crusade, and French people knew that the king had taken the cross, there was not a lord, prelate or great man of any kind who did not take the cross, with the sole exception of Theobald, king of Navarre and count of Champagne. Many others in France also took the cross. The pope and the French clergy saw that the Holy Land beyond the sea was in urgent need of help and counsel and that it was right for the king to spend large sums of money for this purpose; they granted him one tenth of all the revenues of the churches in his realm for a three-year period. When the bishop of Beirut and the other Christian envoys from beyond the sea reached France, they therefore found, by the will of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that the king and a large section of the people of France had already taken the cross to go to the Holy Land.

When the king and the other crusaders were ready, they left home and set off to cross the sea The king went by way of Lyon on the Rhône where he met the pope and received his blessing. From Lyon he left for Aigues-Mortes, intending to sail from there with the August crossing. His boat was ready for him there, and so were those of most of the crusading lords and prelates.

They went aboard and set sail on St Augustine's day,[2] heading straight for the island of Cyprus. On the evening of St Lambert's day[3] Charles, count of Anjou and brother of the king of France,[4] reached Cyprus at the port of Limassol, where he and his wife[5] and his people went ashore. That same night the king reached harbour there. Next day he went ashore with his wife the queen[6] and his forces. About terce Robert, count of Artois and brother of the king of France, reached the same port and he too landed with all his following. Very happy were the three brothers to find each other safe and well. On the advice of the legate and the other good men there it was decided that they should remain on that island until the whole army arrived. They stayed there

until Ascension Day.[7] And the crusaders assembled on this island and went with them to attack the enemies of the faith of Jesus Christ. This was 1248 years after the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the month of September.

CHAPTER 43 1249

How God restored the city of Damietta to King Louis

To Lord Nicholas Arrode,[1] John Sarrasin, chamberlain of the king of France,[2] greeting and love. This is to inform you that the king and queen, the count of Artois, the count of Anjou and his wife and I myself are fit and well in the city of Damietta, which God by miracle, in his compassion and mercy, restored to Christendom on Sunday the fifteenth day of Pentecost.[3]

I will tell you how it happened: the king and the army of Christendom took ship at Aigues-Mortes. We set sail on St Augustine's day at the end of August and landed in Cyprus fifteen days before the feast of St Remigius, that is, on St Lambert's day.[4] The count of Anjou landed in the city of Limassol, as did the king and we who were with him in his ship, the Mountjoy;[5] we disembarked into a town. Next day very early, about terce, the count of Artois also came ashore at this same port. We had only a small force with us in this town, and we stayed there to wait for the fleet which had not yet arrived.

CHAPTER 44 1249

Of Tartar envoys to the king of France

The previous Christmas one of the great princes of Tartary, Eljigidei,[6] a Christian, had sent an embassy to the king of France at Nicosia in Cyprus. The king sent Brother Andrew of the order of St James to meet these envoys.[7] The envoys, who had no idea whom to expect, recognised him at once, as Brother Andrew did them, just as you and I would know each other. The king then called these envoys into his presence and they spoke for some time in their own language. Brother Andrew translated their words into French and told the king what they said: that the greatest prince of the Tartars had been christened at Epiphany and many Tartars with him, even including some of their greatest lords. They also said that Eljigidei would bring his whole Tartar army to support Christendom and the king of France against the caliph of Baghdad, because he wanted to avenge the terrible acts of shame and hatred done to Our Lord Jesus

Christ by the Khwarazmians and other Saracens. Their lord, they said, also wanted to tell the king that when spring came he should enter Egypt to attack the sultan of Babylon, and at exactly the same time the Tartars would invade and make war on the caliph of Baghdad, and so they would be able to help each other.

The king of France proposed to send his envoys and those of Eljigidei back to the latter's lord together, and on to the sovereign lord of the Tartars, Güyük,[1] to learn the truth of all this. They said it was at least six months' travel to the place where Güyük lived, but that their lord Eljigidei and the Tartar host were not far away, as he was in Persia, which he had destroyed and subjected to Tartar rule. They also said that the Tartars were very much at the service of the king and Christendom.

Two weeks after Candlemas,[2] the Tartars' envoys and those of the king of France set off together. They were: Brother Andrew of the order of St James with one of his brothers, also Master John Goderiche, another clerk who was from Poissy, Herbert Le Sommelier and Gilbert of Sens.[3] Half-way through Lent the king heard that these envoys were travelling with their banners displayed through the unbelievers' territory towards the master of the Tartars, and that for dread of this master's envoys they were able to obtain everything they needed.

After this, the king with his whole force, which he reckoned to be at least 2,500 knights and 5,000 crossbowmen and many more fighting men, both horse and foot, went aboard the ships and put out to sea from Limassol and the other Cyprus ports on Ascension Day, 13 May, to go to Damietta. Twenty-two days we were at sea and suffered many difficulties and much distress.[4]

Chapter 45

Of dangers and storms at sea

But as people who live a long way from the sea are surprised when they hear about storms and the dangers of sea travel, and about the different kinds of serpents and beasts and the desert monsters which enter it, and about the nature of the River Nile which falls into the sea by four main channels below Egypt, we shall stop telling our story for a while and talk about these things, just as we have found them described in other old books. Those who do not want to hear this can pass on from this place and come back to the narrative which we shall continue later.

One of the dangers of the sea is that of sirens. These are sea-monsters, formed from the navel upwards like birds. Sometimes when boats go near these creatures, great flocks of them swoop onto the boats and grip them fast,

forcing them under water. Sometimes when a boat is not strong enough, they tear it to pieces, ripping the timbers apart, and so destroying it. At other times they sing so beautifully that the sailors and all on board fall asleep, and then the sirens attack the ships, tear them to pieces and drag them down under water. When any wise and thoughtful sailors see them, they make those aboard ship arm themselves and stop up their ears so that they are quite deaf, and then they can shoot at them with handbows and crossbows while they are still some way off. When the sirens come nearer and take hold of the vessels, they can strike them with knives and axes, with swords and other weapons. In this way they have at times killed 900, counted, in a single day. When there are only a few of them, say two, three or four, they throw them a little cask or some other container which will float, and the sirens all rush to it and take it and are delighted; they toss and throw it to each other, and while they are playing with it, the sailors make all haste to get away. Many have escaped this danger by this means.

Charybdis is another peril of the sea The ancients say that this is the navel of the sea and it is commonly called the Gulf. That is where the earth swallows the sea down into the abyss. From fifteen leagues away and more all around this Gulf everything rushes to it and is dragged down. As fast as a bolt from a crossbow all is drawn there, so that it is terrible to see, a great horror and a great wonder. No boat or any other earthly thing can go near it without being instantly pulled to it, swallowed up and overwhelmed, sucked down into the abyss with the waters of the sea. This Gulf sucks down the waters of the sea two or three times every day and night. And after it has swallowed them like this, it returns them, spouts them upwards in a great jet so high that the sea seems to reach the clouds. That too is very dangerous, but less so than the other. Some say, and it can be found in writing but I do not know for certain if it is true, that the tides of the sea occur whenever the Gulf vomits up the sea-water two or three times a day, and whenever it swallows and sucks it down, the tide and the sea go back.

There is another danger at sea, and these are the great high rocks which appear above the water, and in some places there are many which do not appear at all. When strong winds drive a ship towards them and it chances to strike on them, it is in great danger of being shattered and sunk. Sometimes it happens that the prow of the leading ship dashes against a hidden rock and the others hold back and sail across the sea. That is how ships are sometimes lost.

Some say that in the sea there are great mountains and great rocks which can be seen, and others lying hidden behind them, and that these rocks are made of adamant. When boats touch them, the rocks hold fast to the bolts and iron nails in the vessels, so that they cannot move. Ships are lost in this way.

Another danger is that of mountains which spout and cast forth great fires and flames, and afterwards swallow them down again into their boiling and burning caverns and hollow places. It is found written that the reason these mountains throw out flames like this is because of the great quantity of

sulphur inside these caverns where fire rages and burns. Sometimes these mountains burn so fiercely and spout so much fire and flame into the sea that the water itself boils, and if any boats pass that way the great heat of the sea-water melts the pitch and so the boats take in water and perish. One of these mountains is called Etna. It stands in the island of Sicily.

There are many other dangers at sea, but it would take too long to describe them. I will tell you one more, and then we will talk of other things. In a book called *Caesar*[1] are found the dangers endured at sea and in the Libyan desert by Cato,[2] a great prince of Rome, and his companions. It runs as follows:

CHAPTER 46[3]

Of the same

Cato and his companions wanted to go to the kingdom of Juba, king of Libya, adjacent to Ethiopia where the Moors live, but nature hindered their journey by setting a most dangerous passage in their way. This perilous place was called Syrtes. It was neither land nor sea, for sand and gravel were so heaped up by the winds and waves that many of these shoals could be seen above water. Some were covered by the sea, some a foot or two, others six feet or twelve. Between these heaps of sand the sea was deep enough to float a vessel, if there had been no such shoals there; in other places it was so shallow between the sandbanks that even a small boat could not pass. Thus, Lucan said, it is neither land nor sea, for the land is not dry enough for horse or foot to pass, and the water is not free enough from earth for a boat to pass through it.

Cato was a determined man, certain that his ships would somehow pass through these Syrtes and that nothing would withstand his strength. As soon as his fleet had put to sea to go through the Syrtes and past these dangers, the air became cloudy, black and full of rain. The wind blew so hard it prevented the ships reaching their right port. It drove the waves on and away from the Syrtes and what water there was among the sand dunes was so violently stirred up by the strength of the wind that it fled away and laid the shoals bare. These towered up, and the wind and storm grew fiercer and heaped the sands of the Syrtes up into such tremendous dunes that the waves were powerless against them. None of the ships that had their sails set could be held back by anything the steersman or sailors could do, but were swept by the wind in any direction it chose. Then the wind among the Syrtes dropped a little, and the travellers were in great danger, for the ships drove, prow first, into the sand because the water was so low, and their stems were battered by the storm. Thus they were in danger of breaking up at the bows and of being sunk by the stem. Some of the ships escaped this danger. These, whose sails were not firmly set and could be lowered as the weather grew worse, rode with the tide into deeper water and were not in such danger as the others, but sailed on among the waves. Those which had gone aground on the sandbanks were wretchedly situated, for they had reached land, but not harbour. They could see water all around them and could not see the land which was holding them. However, the sailors did their best, and they knew the conditions in that area and managed to escape, but only after a severe struggle and with great difficulty. They emptied the grounded vessels so as to get away more easily. Some men escaped, others remained and were got off in small barges.

CHAPTER 47

Of dangerous winds

When Cato and his companions entered the desert, the wind became more violent still. Not one of those knights could stay long on his feet, for the wind picked up the sand all around. If the ground had been firm and solid so that the wind could get hold of it, it would have crashed it down all at once, but it was sandy and offered no resistance. The upper sand blew away and that below remained. The wind tore the helmets from the knights' heads and the shields from their necks, the lances and javelins from their hands, and carried them through the air to foreign lands. Well might the inhabitants of other countries be astonished when these things fell among them! They thought, said Lucan, that God was making war on them, shooting at them from the clouds, and that these weapons were aimed at them from the heavens. Long ago one day in Rome Numa Pompilius was offering sacrifice, and in the sight of all beholders a round shield dropped out of the clouds. Wise Romans and Tuscans said at the time that Jupiter had sent it from heaven and that Rome would be master of the world as long as this shield was kept safe. Numa then had twelve others made exactly like the first one, and they were all carried in procession, and the priests who carried them always leaped as they went so that the shield could not possibly be identified. But Lucan tells us that this shield simply fell in the way we have just told you. The wind may have taken it from one of Cato's knights, carried it across the Libyan deserts and borne it in the air and upon clouds as far as Rome. Then when the cloud and wind ceased, it fell.

The young men of Rome who were with Cato suffered severely from the violence of the wind. Each was very much afraid the wind would pick him up and carry him off. They hugged their clothes and weapons to them, dug their fingernails into the sands, clung to the ground with hands and feet, and exerted all their strength to stay close to the ground. The wind heaped sand and grit over them, and did more, for it demolished stone walls and carried dressed stones away. Ruins appeared where pitiful houses had stood, stone upon stone, flung down by the wind. Tracks and paths were so covered with sand that no mother's son, however wise or clever, could find his way except by looking at the stars as sailors do at sea. Moreover we see many stars in this country which the Libyans cannot see, and they see others that are out of our sight, for that is how they are displayed in the firmament, according to the situation of different countries.

In such misery Cato's knights dragged themselves along. They travelled all night and from morning to midday, and the heat was very great because the wind had dropped a little and the dust settled, so that the sun struck directly on them. Their mouths had dried up with thirst and their lips were cracking with thirst and pain.

CHAPTER 48

Of dangers from snakes[1]

The heat increased tremendously, and moreover they were in a part of Libya where no one lives because it is so hot there, summer and winter, and they were travelling from noon onwards. Very little water could they find until they came to a beautiful spring whose waters ran fast, plentiful and clear. They could all have drunk their fill there, if the surroundings of the spring had not been alive with snakes. All around it every piece of ground was so thick with them as to be quite invisible – big snakes and little ones, and even in the water itself there were many *edypes*,[2] snakes which are always thirsty because their poison burns so fiercely. Others were in the water for the sake of its coolness – asps, *chelindres*,[3] *amphybanes*,[4] scorpions, newts and vipers, *cersydres*,[5] toads, lizards and other serpent-like creatures which it would take too long to name.

Great was the men's distress, when they found water and did not dare drink or touch it because of these snakes which hissed and darted their stings at them. Cato saw the danger his knights were in, for they would all die of thirst if they went away without drinking, and he spoke to them:
'My lords, you've no need to be afraid! You can drink this water safely. The danger comes when a snake stings a man and the poison enters his veins and mixes with his blood, or when it bites him, for its teeth are poisonous. But there's no poison in this water, and no danger at all. You can drink it in perfect safety. Just be careful none of the snakes bite or sting you.'

Having said that, he tied his helmet to the end of his lance, dipped up some water from the spring and drank before anyone else, a thing he had not done in the whole Libyan desert. Normally he drank last, but this time he drank first so as to share the danger, if there was any. He drank, and felt no ill effects, as the water was not poisonous. Then the others got water as best they could without attacking the snakes or disturbing the water, for they did not want to poison the water, and if they had slashed at them in the water, venom and blood must have spurted into it. Each man drank as much as he wanted and then they went on across ground that was all littered with snakes.

(We know very well from holy Scripture that the Lord God created snakes at the beginning of the world, and that it is natural for all snakes to dwell for preference in warm earth rather than cold, and this is why there are so many more of them in Libya than elsewhere, especially in the area near India where the heat is greater. That is where the great flying dragons are, ones which can easily break the back of a horse or an ox or knock down an elephant with their powerful tails. A dragon does not kill by poison but can take an ox in its tail and crush it with such strength that the beast falls in two halves.)

There on the ground were the snakes we told you about, and also *emorroiz*,[1] *hasmedites*,[2] *cykalex*,[3] swimming snakes, *parixas*,[4] *presters*,[5] and many other kinds of snakes which cannot be accurately named.

On amongst all these plagues went Cato and his troops, many of whom he saw die on those arid sands from trivial wounds inflicted by small snakes.

Great was the astonishment of those who were not used to seeing men die of such small injuries.

CHAPTER 49

Of the same[6]

A young man of high birth, Aulus by name, Cato's standard-bearer, trod on a *dipse*,[7] which is a little snake. It wounded him slightly on the foot, and at first he hardly noticed it, as it had bitten him through his footwear, and he never made any complaint about it or felt anything but perfectly well. Then when he looked at it and the venom began to run through him, and his veins, marrow and entrails began to overheat and burn, the venom consumed the humours whose task it was to keep his body strong and whole. It dried up his tongue and palate, no drop of liquid or sweat issued from any of the orifices of his body, no tears from his eyes. The heat of the venom caused such a violent thirst that no one could hold him or stop him running about the country like a madman, looking for the water he craved. If he had been by the Rhine, the Nile or the Rhône, he would have wanted to swallow the whole river. He thought there was nothing wrong with him but thirst and did not realise the *dipse* had bitten him, but it is a small snake and bites before its victim is aware. Aulus scraped at the dry sand to see if he could find any drop of water, then ran back to the Syrtes which were not far away, for he kept beside the sea. He sucked up the spray from the Syrtes, but could not drink enough to quench his thirst. They drew blood from their animals' veins and filled his mouth with it, they even took a steel blade and opened the veins of his legs, which were excessively swollen, and he sucked out his own blood. Then it was not thirst but death which claimed him.

CHAPTER 50

Of the same[1]

Almost at once another sad event occurred. A small snake known as a *cerf*[2] bit a knight, Sabelles, in the thigh. He felt its teeth in him, so took it, tossed it up above his head and then struck it with a dart and pinned it to the ground, just as one would spit a frog. This is a very small snake, but its bite causes a worse injury than any other. His skin broke at once, his flesh cracked open to the very bone, it rotted and poured down him; all the flesh dropped and fell away from his thighs, leaving his leg and knee-bones stripped bare. Then the flesh of his buttocks split, the skin on his belly burst open, his entrails broke out, and the venom ran through his veins, nerves and joints; the veins of his feet were empty. Nothing within the man remained hidden. The venom laid bare his shoulders, arms, neck and head, everything rotted off him in less time than it

takes rain or a little snow to vanish. And that was nothing to the marvel that happened next, for if the venom ate up his flesh, so too can fire, but what fire can burn bones away? Yet not one bone of him remained. This kind of snake has the mastery and the lordship among all the snakes and plagues of Libya, for the others only take men's souls, but this one takes everything.

CHAPTER 51

Of the same[1]

Then there was another strange happening – a kind of snake called a *prester*[2] suddenly struck Nafide. His face turned red as blood and swelled up so that his eyes, nose and mouth, all human features vanished. Then the venom spread through his body and all his limbs swelled so that he no longer looked like anything human, but a monster. His hauberk could not contain him; it burst open, torn apart by the strength of the poison as if it had been nothing more than an old shirt. Then his skin swelled up enormously, so much so that the swelling was greater than the length of his arms, he became so huge that one could have rolled him about without injuring his arms. No one could tell from looking at him that he had ever been human. He was still swelling up when his companions fled in terror. Not one of them would have touched him to give him burial, they all fled, terrified, and left him there.

CHAPTER 52

Of the same[3]

They had not gone much further when another strange thing happened to them. *Hermoroiz*,[4] another vicious snake, bit a young man called Tullus. He was a distinguished young man who with his utmost strength followed Cato's example in work and goodness. As soon as the snake bit him, his whole trunk and limbs turned orange-red like saffron, there was not an orifice, ears, mouth, eyes, nose, nor any other above or below, from which red blood did not spurt. Blood sprang out of every part of him, his body seemed to be one single wound or as if it was immersed in a bath full of blood. Soon after that a knight was killed by a serpent known as an asp. He showed no sign of pain but simply died then and there, as if he had fallen asleep. Then the others made all the speed they could and travelled long hours for fear of the great danger they were in.

CHAPTER 53

Of the same[5]

As they travelled on they came to an old tree-trunk which stood there without leaves or branches, and a snake leaped from this trunk and struck violently at a knight, hitting him on the temple. Its beak was hard and sharp, a bolt from a wound-up crossbow could not have driven so fast through both temples as this snake did. In Africa it is called *jaculus* because it strikes so fast. The knight's name was Paul. He was not poisoned, but fell dead, killed by the wound through his temples.

CHAPTER 54

Of the same[1]

Next Murcus, a constable, encountered a basilisk or cockatrice, as lay people call it. Its nature is such that it can kill birds in the air and burn up grass in front of it with its breath. No snake or other creature can survive this breath except for the weasel, which kills it when it can get at it. 'King of snakes', is what the writing calls it.[2] It has the hindquarters of a toad and the front is that of a cock, with beak and cockscomb. If it sees a man before he sees it, it kills him. Murcus did see it first and promptly speared it, but the astonishing thing was that the venom raced up his javelin and entered his body faster than an eye can blink. Murcus instantly drew his sword, cut off his own arm at the shoulder, and thus escaped. Otherwise his whole body would have been poisoned and destroyed.

None of Cato's men could rest night or day, for they did not trust the ground they lay down on, they had no moss or leaves under them but lay stretched out on the bare earth. The snakes, which are cold at night, perceived their warm breath and gathered near them for warmth, sleeping between their arms and legs, but did not sting them, as they are less able to use their poison at night because the cold affects them.

The travellers could keep no track of their journey except by the stars, for there are no roads or paths in the desert.

CHAPTER 55

Of the same[3]

One morning Publius, Scipio's nephew, happened to get up early to relieve himself, and the others were waking up, but it was not yet light enough to recognise individuals. Publius saw a long dragon stretched out on the sand, a good fifteen feet long and thick as a big piece of timber. He thought it was a log or a big tree lying there, and sat down on it to put on his shoes. When the dragon felt him sit down on its back, it instantly flexed its tail, wrapped it round him and began to drag him away. Publius shouted out and called to his uncle. Scipio drew his sword and ran to help him, and so did other young men.

Marrus got there first, raised his sword and struck down, meaning to cleave the creature's head, but the sword sprang back as if from a steel anvil and the serpent seized him in its sharp pointed teeth. It sank its teeth – the hauberk was no protection – into his liver and lungs, and then dropped him at its feet and gaped wide again. Galien attacked it, thrusting his sword into its mouth with the point against the palate and the pommel down by the chin. The serpent closed its jaws and the point drove a good twelve inches into the palate and stopped at the hard outer hide. Now the serpent had lost the use of its teeth, and they attacked it wherever they could and wounded it in several places. But its great strength was in its tail. Publius was already quite unable to breathe, when Scipio drove his sword, which was very sharp, into the hair on its tail, and worked it until he had cut through the spine and the marrow of the tail, where all its strength lay. Publius fell to the ground. Then they hacked at it until all their swords were foul with venom and cut it to pieces. They took a precious stone from between its eyes. This was worth the gold of a whole city, for no one who wore it could be affected by sorcery or enchantment. Scipio kept it for some time and then it was taken to Rome and found in the treasury of the emperor Heraclius. Severe indeed were the sufferings and distress of those men in the desert, and many died there either of heat or snake-bite.

CHAPTER 56

Of the Psylles who cure sufferers from poison[1]

On they went until chance brought them a little help and comfort, although it came late for they had lost many men. They found a kind of people who were quite unafraid of snake-bites. These lived in the land of Libya and were called *Psylles Marmarinz*. They had a spoken charm, as powerful against snakes as the most efficacious plants in the world. They were so constituted that their blood would not receive venom or poison. When children were born to them, they would put a very uncommon snake called an asp into their cradles and make the children handle it. If the child was theirs, the asp did it no harm; if someone else had fathered the child, it was poisoned and would die. Thus they tested the truth of their wives and children, as an eagle does its chicks as soon as they are hatched: the chick which gazes straight at the rays of the sun it accepts and feeds, the chick which blinks at the light, it does not recognise and throws out. In the same way the Psylles count as their own the child which the asp does not touch, but do not acknowledge the other, for their children play with snakes as with a ball.

These Psylles could protect strangers just as well as themselves and when guests came to them, would keep them quite safe from snakes. When Cato and the Romans found these people, they made them accompany the army, and each evening when they were going to make camp the Psylles would recite the charms in the place where the tents were to be pitched and all the snakes

would flee away. They would also light a fire of a kind whose smoke would drive the snakes off so that they did not dare come near the men. Onto this fire they put wallwort, the juice of arabic fennel, tamarisk, parsnip, larch and southernwood, a plant which is good for sheep and whose smoke snakes detest, and stag's horn. They put all these things onto the fire and so could sleep safely through the night.[1]

If a snake poisoned any of the Romans during the day, it was wonderful to see how the Psylles fought the venom: they used their saliva to moisten all around the wound; the saliva constricted the venom and held it in the wound so that it could not run up or down. Then they would recite their charms so fast that froth fell from their mouths and they kept up an uninterrupted muttering, for if they paused even for a moment the venom would make the wound swell and suppurate and would spread through the veins. Sometimes the venom which had spread into the veins was driven back to the wound by the strength of these words and the wound would reject it and the man was saved. If the venom was so strong it would not come out, then they would keep licking the limbs and draw the venom to the wound. In this way they saved great men from death and such was the help Cato and the Romans found. Before this, though, very many died and were lost, and they wandered two months in this desert.

In the deserts between Syria and Egypt where Shirkuh and his armies encountered the great storm we spoke of earlier,[2] there are nothing like the quantities of snakes found in the deserts of Libya, although Egypt and Libya share a common border.

CHAPTER 57

Of the nature of the River Nile[3]

Many have wondered why the Nile spreads across the land of Egypt and why it floods late in the year. When Julius Caesar, afterwards emperor of Rome, was in Egypt, he stayed there some time. One day he was in the city of Alexandria and with him was the bishop of the heathens' law of that city and country. His name was Acoreus. He had been born in the city of Memphis, which some say is now called Babylon. This Acoreus, bishop of Alexandria, was seated on a faldstool; he was an old man, ancient, wise and discreet in such matters, honoured by everyone for his great worth. Julius Caesar addressed him as follows:

'Sir, I would be very glad to understand something of the nature of the Nile, and how it is that it spreads across the land of Egypt to water and irrigate it, and where the spring and source of it may lie. I am well aware that Egypt is one of the best lands in the world for studying the nature of astronomy, because it rains so little there, and therefore the air is cleaner and clearer than in other lands.' Acoreus answered him:

‘Caesar, I am happy to reveal the secrets of my former masters who knew much, and to speak of things hidden till now from those not fit to know them. Others may say it is better not to speak of hidden and miraculous things, but I say it is good to make clear and to teach everything that can be useful.

As it pleased the Almighty King, the Lord God gave different powers to the sun and the moon at the beginning of the world and to the five other stars which are called planets, a word that means ‘wanderers’, because they are never at rest, but travel and move against the body of the firmament which constantly turns. Also the sun divides the four seasons of the year, because they are measured according to its rising and setting. It changes night into day for us, and when it appears over the earth its light is so strong that it quenches for us the light of the moon and stars, which shine all day long just as they do at night. The sun is hot and burning; the moon is cold and humid, and the sea rises as it waxes and sinks back as it wanes. Saturn is cold and full of ice and snow; Mars is hot and brings hail, wind, lightning and sudden accidents; Jupiter makes the air soft and mild if other evil stars do not prevent it; Venus is both hot and cold and nourishes sown crops and good things of the earth. Mercury, hot and humid, causes flux and reflux of the sea and of the Nile, Caesar, that you asked about. When Mercury leaves the sign called the Crab and enters its neighbouring sign the Lion in that part of the firmament where on the left there is a star rising called *Hernu*[1] or the Dog Star, because it makes it dangerous to catch fish or to let blood, then the Nile leaves its bed and spreads over the fields of Egypt. This is because the river is their neighbour under the planet I spoke of, Mercury, because Mercury is then in that part of the firmament which is directly opposite the Nile, and the heat and humidity of the planet cause it to rise. And as one humour mingling in another produces heat in the second, the heat, like a humour mixing with another, draws the water out of its channel towards itself; and the humidity does not let it dry up as it comes because the planet, as I told you before, contains in itself both heat and humidity. Mercury does the same to the sea of Ocean when it is near it, for it is always in the light of the sun.

The ancients used to say that in the mountains of Ethiopia there is much snow, and that when this thaws, the Nile rises, but no one can believe this, for Ethiopia is so hot it cannot ever have frost or snow – all the men and women of that land are black because of the heat. All the rivers, moreover, that rise because snow or ice is melting start to do so in March when warm weather is beginning to thaw the snow, but the Nile does not leave its bed or spread out until *Hernu* enters, that is to say after the end of June, half way through July. Then it spreads, and September is more than half gone before it returns to its bed. Not a drop of water leaves it all winter, but only during the fiercest heat, to protect the fields of Egypt from extreme drought and to soften the earth and nourish all the seed that is cast into it at the end of autumn. In July it leaves its bed, when we have longed for it and called it and made good sacrifices for its coming. But what man exists who can give a sufficient reason? Here is given a

reason from nature why it should rise and flood at certain times and when the world has need of it.

Others said long ago that when Zephyrus[1] blew for a long time it could bring its wet and heavy clouds from the west to the other side of the rain-winds, and that these clouds would fall into some part of the Nile and make the river rise; or that when the wind blew hard against the course of the Nile it held back the water so that it could not flow and it would break out and spread across the country. Other people said that different rivers joined the Nile underground and thus it overflowed. Later it was said that the sun and the airs drew clouds from the sea of Ocean and that these clouds fell into the Nile at night, so that it overflowed in August. Many people believe some part of these different assertions.

My own opinion, and my belief,' said Acoreus, 'is this–that at the beginning of the world the Lord God put waters into the veins of the earth, and these flow into the river at certain times. When they break out of these veins, then the river flows fast because the water is so abundant and it is forced to leave its bed and spread over the fields of Egypt.

Others who long ago wanted, as you do, to understand the nature of the Nile, were kings of Persia, of Egypt and of Macedonia. They were wise men in their time and wanted to explain these things and left their writings on this subject for those who were not yet born. But whatever anyone has said, we cannot be wholly certain. The great king Alexander sent men up the Nile to the very end of Ethiopia, through land which seemed on fire, in order to find the head of the river, but it came to nothing. His servants were sent back with a stone which an aged man sent to Alexander, and he told them they were seeking foolishness and should return. Sesostris,[2] king of the East, went to that country and was so great a king that other kings carried him on their shoulders. He too wanted to know where the Nile originated, but he could sooner have drunk up all the water of the western rivers Rhone and Po than find that out, however great his power, nor could he learn where the river is born or where it comes from. Cambyses[3] too was so frantically anxious to know where the Nile came from that he travelled to the end of the world and reached the country where no one dies. When the men and women there have lived so long that they can no longer turn over for old age, they have themselves carried beyond its boundaries and there they die. Cambyses and all his men went right through this land and travelled on till their food ran out and they could find nothing to eat. Then out of hunger they ate their animals and their horses. Even so Cambyses would not give up but went on until for lack of food he had his men killed and they ate each other, just as if they had been pigs or sheep. But none of them ever reached the source of the Nile.

No song or story tells us the certain truth. No one can boast that theirs is the country where the Nile begins. All I can tell you, Caesar, is what the Creator allows me to know. It is certain that the River Nile rises and spreads at the hottest time of the year, when the sun has left the Crab and is in the Lion, and

this is in July, the fifth month from March. We call it *quiptile*;[1] in your calendar you call it July, from your name. The river flows from south to north; once it turns west, at other times east. Libya and Arabia are the two countries where it runs straightest without turning. It crosses Ethiopia, not as a single stream but in the bed of the Euphrates, into which it falls. Afterwards it splits into several streams which bring water to many lands, and then they join up again and come as one to a people called *Serez*,[2] where there are quantities of worms which make silk. These are the people who see it first. It is believed to run across their lands before it touches any other inhabited countries. It appears everywhere as a great river. We may wonder where it comes from, but no one can say. Meroe, the chief city of the Jews in India,[3] where people are black as pepper, is surrounded by two arms of the Nile. There are many trees there of the kind which grow into ebony trees. No trees growing in that place can cast a shade deep enough to keep the rays of the sun from the Euphrates, which runs there too, and prevent its waters becoming scalding hot. When the Nile leaves Meroe it runs through the sands of Libya in that part where no one can live because of the sun's heat, yet the sun never reduces its flow. Here the river is narrow and deep, in other places broad and shallow; now it splits into several streams, then again these unite into a single channel between Arabia and Egypt. Between the Great Sea and the Red Sea it runs quietly and without sound to the place where it falls into the sea. In other places which are steeper, it runs roughly, tumbles stones and rocks before it and sends up clouds of spray. When it must spread across Egypt, it begins to move near the city called Memphis, where its banks are low. There it first begins to spread and then floods across the whole land. Mountains check it to right and left so that it cannot flow into Libya or anywhere else, but it waters all the valleys, plains and fields of Egypt right up to the mountains.'

CHAPTER 58

Of the same and of the stone which was sent to Alexander[4]

When Alexander the Great,[5] king of Macedon, who conquered so many lands, went eastward with his armies towards the birthplace of the sun, they all encamped beside the River Nile, which St Jerome in the Bible calls Gyon.[1] There Alexander stopped, for he had travelled far by land and sea and was sure he had reached the eastern end of the world. From then on, he was told, he would find neither men nor women. He had a ship loaded with everything necessary and then ordered his men aboard. The two captains of this ship were called Mirones and Aristeus. He spoke to them as follows:

'Go up the River Nile until you have eaten three-quarters of your food. Use the last quarter on your way back, for you will come downstream faster than you go up. See that you are able to tell me what you discover.' They did as Alexander commanded. They travelled up against the current until they had

used up three-quarters of their supplies. Just as they were about to begin the return journey, Mirones saw in the distance a small handsome dwelling standing beside the river. It was enclosed in a high wall and had a pleasant garden. This building stood on one side of the river, and on the other rose a high mountain whose top seemed to reach the clouds. At the foot of the mountain stood a very tall marble pillar with an iron ring attached to it. The ring held a heavy chain which stretched across the river above the water, across the wall and so to the dwelling house. This house stood between the river and another mountain, which was just as high as the first.

'Let's go on,' said Mirones to his companion, 'and look at this strange thing.' They went on as far as the chain, but could not pass it unless it was lowered. They shook it, as if they were trying to find out what it was. At this noise, an old and ancient man thrust his head and shoulders out of a window. His hair and beard were long, thick and white, whiter than any wool, his face red and rubicund and he wore a garment of white samite. As soon as he put his head out of the window such a fragrant odour spread from his clothing that the men in the boat thought balm or incense had been released there. The garden, too, gave off a wonderful perfume.

'Sirs,' he said, 'who are you and what are you looking for?'

'We are sent by King Alexander,' they answered, 'and we want to discover what kind of people live further up this river, and report this to him, as to one who seeks to be lord of the world. And if you will revictual this boat for us and have this chain raised or lowered so that we can pass, we shall go on until we have found some great marvel which we can report to our lord.'

'You are not wise,' the old man replied, 'to try to discover the secrets of the lord of the world.'

'What,' said Mirones, 'is there any other lord of the world but Alexander?'

'Yes,' he said, 'one other, and there is none like him. Alexander is older than him, and yet he existed before Alexander.[2] He granted this place and this passage to me to guard, for beyond it there is a rich garden where he wants none to enter. In it there is a tree whose fruit is such that if any eat it, they cannot die. More than three thousand years have I guarded this chain; no one has ever gone past except two men, one before the Flood and one after.[1] They live and will live long in this garden safe and sound. I shall not move from here until they have returned, but this will not be until another king comes, one who wants to exalt his kingdom still higher than Alexander, for he will want to rise up to the stars. Then shall come my king who will not endure this proud man but will send his two champions against him, and then it will be right for me to lower this chain. I can tell you no more. Go back to your lord, for if you go on, you will certainly die. And as you are going looking for marvels at your lord's command, you shall take him one from me; a greater I have never seen.' Then he took a most beautiful stone out of a small purse. It was about the size of a hazelnut, perfectly clear, and on one side there was a wonderful eye carved so skilfully that you would have thought this eye saw

you and watched you just as clearly as the most genuine eyes in the world. He held it out to Mirones and said, 'Here, take this to your lord, and tell him that such a man sent it, for you cannot know my name. Tell him that this stone resembles him more than anything in the world. Let him look at the stone, he looks at himself.' Having said this, he closed the window and they never saw him again.

Mirones took the stone and he and his companion Aristeus at once turned to go back. They continued downriver till they came to Alexander their lord and they gave him the stone and told him about the marvel they had found and heard. Alexander was astonished, and he gazed at the stone. He sent for wise men; none of them could tell him in what way the stone could resemble him. Then he remembered his teacher Aristotle, who was lying ill, and sent ordering him to tell him what none of the wise men could explain to him. Aristotle had himself carried to the king; the king handed him the stone. Aristotle looked at it. Then he said,

'Sire, it is true that you are like the stone, and the stone is like you. Have a set of scales brought, and plenty of your gold, and I will show you.' The king had the scales and the gold brought. Aristotle put the stone on one scale and a gold halfpenny on the other. The stone weighed heavier and went down. He took off the halfpenny and put a bezant there, and the stone still went down. He added a second bezant; the stone was heavier. He added a third and a fourth and so on till the scale was full of bezants and the stone still went down. Aristotle had these scales removed and others, the biggest he could find, brought, but they could not fill them up, not with gold, silver, iron, lead, earth or anything else, but still it was always the stone that sank. Then Aristotle said,

'There's no need to go on. No one can put anything there that will outweigh the stone.'

The king and the other nobles were amazed. Then Aristotle spat into the dust, stirred his saliva and the dust together and made a paste with which he covered the eye carved on the stone, and put the stone onto the scale. It was very different then. What lay on the other scale weighed more heavily, and little by little Aristotle emptied it till there was only a halfpenny there, and this weighed more than the stone. The halfpenny was removed and Aristotle put a straw there – the straw was heavier. Alexander and his men were more astonished than ever. Then Aristotle said,

'You do indeed resemble this stone. As long as its eye was uncovered it weighed more than anything that could be set against it. When its eye was covered with dust, a straw outweighed it. You are just the same: as long as your eyes are open in this short life, you outweigh the whole world, whose lord men call you, but when you are dead and your eyes are covered with a little dust and earth, it will be very different. There is no one, even if he envied you before, who will not then be glad to exchange you for a halfpenny or something less.' Alexander knew very well that his teacher was telling him the truth. Thoughtful and sad, he took the stone and looked at it, then threw it into

the river it had come from. The stone floated and travelled up against the stream. No deer or greyhound ever ran so fast, and all knew it was going back to the place it came from.

But now we will return to our narrative.[1]

CHAPTER 59 1249

How the Christians went ashore

On the Friday after Trinity at about terce we arrived off Damietta, with much though by no means all of our force, and we were a good three leagues from shore. The king ordered the fleet to anchor and summoned all the leaders to join him at once. They gathered aboard the Mountjoy, the king's ship, and agreed unanimously that they would land next day, early, fighting their way ashore if their enemies dared offer resistance. Orders were given that all the fleet's galleys and small boats should be prepared, and next morning all who were fit to do so must go aboard them. It was made clear that all must confess themselves, make their wills and put their affairs in order for death, if Our Lord Jesus Christ so willed it.

Very early next day[2] the king heard the service of Our Lord and such a mass as is usual at sea, and he armed himself and ordered all to arm and get into the small boats. The king went aboard a Normandy cog, and so did we, our companions and the legate, who held up the True Cross and instructed the armed men who were getting into the other small boats to go ashore. The king ordered my lord John of Beaumont,[3] Matthew of Marly and Geoffrey of Sergines[4] into the ship's barge and entrusted to them the banner of my lord St Denis.[1] The barge led the way and all the other vessels followed it and the banner. The cog with the king, the legate beside him holding aloft the True Cross, and ourselves followed on in the rear. When we were within crossbowshot from the shore, very many Turks, both horse and foot and well armed, facing us on the shore shot strongly at us, and we at them. As we came in to land at least 2000 Turkish cavalry rode into the sea to encounter our men, and many on foot waded out as well. Our men, and the knights too, saw this as they stood armed in the boats, and they refused to follow the banner of my lord St Denis but leaped fully armed into the sea, some up to their chests, some to their arm-pits, some deeper, some less so, according to the varying depths of the sea.[2] Many of our men, with strenuous exertion and in difficulty and danger, got their horses out of the boats. Then our crossbowmen renewed their efforts and shot so fast and so thick that it was a wonder to see. And then ours came ashore and made good their landing.

When the Turks saw this, they gathered together, talked in their language, and then attacked our men so furiously that it seemed they would all be killed and cut to pieces. But ours did not shift from the seashore but fought back with such vigour that they seemed to have suffered nothing at sea, no danger, no trouble or distress, and all was through the strength of Jesus Christ and the True Cross which the legate held high above his head against the unbelievers. When the king saw the others getting out of the boats into the sea, he wanted to do the same and join them in the water, but they refused to let him do this. None the less he did get out in spite of them and was up to his waist in the sea, and all of us with him.

Fighting continued a long time after this. When the battle had lasted from morning till midday, the Turks retreated into Damietta. The king remained on the shore with the Christian army. Few or no Christians were lost in this battle but the Turks lost up to 500 killed as well as many horses. Three emirs were among their dead. Rukn al-Din, who commanded in the battle in which the count of Montfort and the count of Bar were defeated and captured near Gaza, was killed in this battle. He was said to be the greatest lord in all Egypt after the sultan, a good knight, hardy, and wise in warfare.

Next day, the Sunday after the octave of Pentecost,[3] a Saracen went to the king in the morning and told him that all the Saracens had left Damietta, and let him be hanged if this was not true. The king had him put under guard and sent men at once to find out. Definite word came to the king and the army before none,[1] saying that many of our own people were already in Damietta and the king's banners were flying from a tall tower.

CHAPTER 60 1249

Of Damietta's great strength and ample supplies

Eager thanks did our men give to Our Lord Jesus Christ when they heard that, praising him for the great kindness he had shown to Christendom, because the city of Damietta was so strong with its ramparts, ditches and many tall, strong towers, its hoardings and barbicans, its ample supplies of engines, weapons, food and everything needed to defend a town, that it was hard to imagine how it could be taken, except at the cost of great labour and toil and with overwhelming numbers. Our men found it well stocked with all necessities. In its prison were found fifty-three Christian slaves, who had been there, they said, thirty-two years. They were released and taken to the king. They said the Saracens had fled on the Saturday night, and that they were telling each other about the Christians,

saying that 'the pigs had come'.

Syrian Christians were found too, how many I do not know, who lived there under Saracen rule. When they saw the Christians entering the town, they took crosses and so were not afraid. They were allowed to keep their houses and possessions.

After they had spoken to the king and the legate, the king and the army left the city and encamped outside it. Next day, the day after the feast of St Barnabas the apostle,[2] the king entered Damietta at prime in a great procession and with great humility. He had the town's chief mosque, indeed all the mosques, destroyed and used to build churches dedicated in honour of Our Lord Jesus Christ. We felt sure we would not leave Damietta until the feast of All Saints[3] because of the rise of the river of Paradise which runs there and is called the Nile. No one can go to Alexandria or Babylon or to the Cairo when it has flooded across the land of Egypt. The floods, it was said, were not due to recede until then.

You must know that we have no information about the sultan of Babylon,[1] but the king has been told that other sultans are making war on him. Know for certain that since the Lord God gave us the city, no one has been seen near our army except Bedouin Saracens, who approach now and again within two leagues of our forces, but when our crossbowmen start to shoot at them they run away. These Bedouins come about the army at night to steal horses, and people's heads. The sultan of Babylon is said to give ten bezants for every head of a Christian that is brought to him, and so these Bedouin Saracens cut the heads off hanged men and dig up buried bodies to get their heads and take them to the sultan, so it is said. One Bedouin Saracen who came every night was captured, and is still being held. They could do this thieving easily enough, for although the king has placed his wife the queen and part of his war equipment inside the palace and strongholds of the sultan of Babylon in Damietta, and the legate has the halls and strongholds of Rukn al-Din, who was killed in the fighting when we landed, and each of the barons too has chosen his own large residence in the city of Damietta, yet the host of Christendom, the king and the legate are quartered outside the town. Because of this Bedouin thieving, the Christians have begun to dig good ditches, deep and wide, around the army, but they are by no means complete yet. Thus in his mercy Our Lord restored the noble city and fortress of Damietta to Christendom. It was then 1249 years since the Incarnation, the Sunday after the octave of Pentecost, that is the sixth day of June, which fell on the Sunday.

How many years between the two captures of Damietta

> Thirty years ago the Christians took the city from the Saracens with great toil and labour, and lost it again the same year when they moved to go and lay siege to the Cairo, and the river rose and flooded all around them so that they could go neither forward nor back. For this reason we think the army should not move until the river has dropped and returned to its bed. Inform all our friends of these letters.
>
> Written in the city of Damietta, the eve of the nativity of my lord St John the Baptist[2] in the same month.

CHAPTER 62 1249

How the host of Christendom was terribly defeated and Damietta restored a second time to the Saracens

When Damietta had been captured in the way we told you earlier, the cardinal and the king of France had an archbishop[1] appointed to the town's high church, formerly the chief mosque, and put canons there to perform the service of Our Lord. Good rich rents did the king assign both to the archbishop and to the canons, and also to the Templars, the Hospitallers, the brothers of Our Lady of the Germans, the Minorites, the brothers of St James,[2] of the Trinity,[3] and others, so many that we cannot name them all. To the lords and princes of the Holy Land the king assigned rich and handsome residences within Damietta appropriate to each. He had the churches which had been converted from mosques, and others too, richly adorned with chalices, censers, candles and candelabras, crucifixes, chasubles, albs, stoles, maniples, altar cloths and cloths of silk, pictures of Our Lady, choir copes, tunics, dalmatics, phylacteries of gold, silver and crystal, and everything else that was proper. The good king had priests, chaplains, clerks and men of Holy Church placed wherever there was need, and he assigned and delivered to them revenues on which they could live with honour and decency, according to what was right for them all. Great care and determination, great thought and judgement did the king apply to these things and to others by which the service of Our Lord should be maintained in the city of Damietta and in that land, and the Christian faith be upheld and respected.

The fortress of Damietta itself, already very strong, he made wonderfully stronger – ditches were dug out, barbicans built where they were lacking, stockades and conduits repaired, and much more that we cannot describe. The king spent a great deal of energy and thought on these things we have told you about, so much so that a number of people in the host said it was all nonsense and folly, we could very well have managed with less.

The queen, the countess of Artois,[4] the countess of Poitiers[5] and other

Christians resided in houses in Damietta. The king, the cardinal and the bulk of the army were encamped opposite the bridge to the city, on the River Nile, on the same island on which they had landed. They were quartered on the river bank, and the river itself lay between the army and Damietta. This is the island of Maalot, which stands across the river opposite Damietta and is rich and fertile. The king and the Christians were encamped there on the sands. They suffered very much from the extreme heat and from the numerous flies and fleas, large and small, which infested the army. Bedouins and Saracens went to and fro spying on the host and attacked any of ours they could find at a distance from it, and we did the same to them. Sometimes the Saracens won, more often we did. Thus Christians and Saracens were often found lying dead in the fields round the army's encampment. About half way through August the Turks approached the Christians' camp with their companies arrayed and ready for battle. The king had orders proclaimed throughout the host: let no one dare to leave the lists, and so none of our Christians ventured to move.

The Saracens remained in their ranks for some time. However, when some of them realised that none of the Christians were going to come out of the stockade, they left the main body and rode close up to the stockade and the Christians in provocation. My lord Walter of Antrèche[1] could not stand that: he rode out on his well-armoured horse and left the enclosure, against the king's command, but no one followed him. Vigorously he attacked the Saracens who had come so near, and a fine battle he fought. So well and with such energy did Sir Walter bear himself all alone there that he killed three of them and drove off the rest. They fled to their own companies, who were arrayed at some distance. These were watching but did not move. Sir Walter struck spurs into his horse to pursue the fugitives, but the horse was tired and fell, with Sir Walter under him. When the fleeing Saracens saw Sir Walter fall, they turned swiftly back towards him and meant to kill him. But my lord Imbert of Beaujeu[2] saw what was happening and rode out fast, and other knights with him, and they spurred hard towards him. The Turks saw them, had no time to kill Sir Walter, leaped onto their horses and fled back to their own ranks. Sir Walter was carried back to the host and on the third day he died of the injury he received when he fell.[3] The Saracens returned to their own ranks when they saw that the Christians would not fight them.

Later on, about the feast of St Luke the Evangelist,[4] there were such great and widespread storms at sea in these districts that very many vessels in harbour were in danger, many of our people were drowned and supplies of food lost at sea. This storm was felt in almost all the seaports of the Holy Land. It did not affect the port of Limassol in Cyprus, where the count of Poitiers[5] and his whole force came ashore. He and his people rested there briefly and then put to sea again and all came safe and sound to Damietta. Very happy was the king, and so were the whole host, at the arrival of the count of Poitiers and his men.

Then when the feast of St Cecilia came,[6] the king had his ships prepared.

There were so many barges and galleys, so many great and small boats loaded with foodstuffs, with weapons, engines, armour and everything else needed in warfare, with men and horses, that it was a wonder to behold. Ships and small boats, there were so many of all sorts that they covered the whole of that part of the river. The army then moved and left Maalot island and crossed to the other island on the far side where Damietta stands. They arrayed their companies and set off upriver, so that the forces going by boat and those on land were travelling side by side. Those on land had the river and the fleet on their right all the time. They all went upriver together, going south, with Damietta on their right and Tanis castle on their left, moving against the great body of Turks who were massed beyond the river, above Tanis water in the place called Mansourah. At that place the Tanis leaves the left side of the Nile's main channel and flows into the sea past Tanis castle. The Saracens knew that the king intended to besiege the noble city of Babylon and the Cairo and to conquer the whole land of Egypt if the Lord our God would help him, and that he would have to cross the River Tanis there because he had a large fleet and could not abandon it without heavy loss, and it was there that the rivers divided.

They travelled upriver slowly and by very short stages each day, because they were moving into the teeth of a fierce wind, and the ships and other vessels could not be brought on without immense labour, but they could not leave them. The king and the others on land travelled safely, but from Damietta to Mansourah, not more than eighteen leagues, it took them over thirty-one days. They left Damietta on 20 November and reached their goal on the day of St Thomas the Apostle, the fifth day before Christmas.[1]

As they were moving on by short stages the Turks ambushed them at dawn on the day after St Nicholas' day.[2] Six hundred of the bravest and most experienced Turks, the best armed and mounted of all their army, were sent at daybreak to charge our vanguard. So fast and fiercely they came, it seemed they must defeat our whole host. But the Templars and the others of ours in the vanguard were not in the least startled or dismayed. Steadily they received them on the edges of their swords, fierce and sharp was the conflict while it lasted. Soon it was over, the defeated Turks fled back fast to their ambush and from there they fled all together to their host. Three hundred Turks were found killed, but only two Christians.

After this our men suffered very little trouble until they reached the forward point of the island where the two rivers divide. They had the Saracen host ahead of them, across the water, the Nile on the right and the Tanis on the left, so that ours could neither go forward in any direction, nor could they retreat. They encamped, therefore, where they were, between the Tanis and the Nile.

On this same day the Saracens crossed the Tanis and attacked our infantry. But the knights and horsemen of our host saw this, raced there and attacked; the Saracens did not hold for long but were heavily defeated, losing many killed and taken. The rest fled away, but to a wretched end – they could not

make for the Tanis but went towards the Nile, where our fleet lay at anchor. Our Christians were pursuing them, slaughtering and knocking them down, and when they reached the river the Saracens plunged in, horse and foot, to escape death. But it did them little good. Our men in the boats attacked as soon as they saw them; they saw Saracen horsemen and footsoldiers drowning and they hit them with swords, axes and poles and so killed them in the water. Some of the Christians got long boathooks and fished the men up out of the water, drew them close in and then threw them back into the river. In this way almost all the Saracens in this assault were lost.

Next day the Turks attacked again with a much larger force, burning for revenge. They charged our host; our men received them without mercy on sword and lance-point. It was a fierce and bitter encounter. The Turks could not endure it; they suffered a defeat as serious or worse than that of the day before.

In these two attacks 2000 or more Turks were killed or drowned and few or no Christians. When the Turks saw how badly they had been defeated in these two assaults, they drew together and kept very quiet on the other side of the Tanis, on the bank where they were encamped, and made vigorous preparations to prevent our forces crossing the river. Many of the Turks said that if our army could cross without being badly damaged and its numbers reduced, it would conquer Babylon, the Cairo and the whole land of Egypt in spite of the Turks. After these two encounters, our forces were reasonably free from Turkish attack until the feast of St Sebastian.[1]

CHAPTER 63 1250

How the king and the Christians went to Mansourah

News which had been current among our forces as soon as they left Damietta was now confirmed: the sultan of Babylon who had been ill almost a year had recently died.[2] He had sent reliable messengers to his son, then in the East, telling him to come quickly to Egypt and be lord of the land and to resist the Christians who were trying to conquer it.[3] He had made all his emirs and all the important men in the country swear on the book of Muhammad's law which they call the al-Koran[4] and take an oath of fealty and homage, promising to accept him as lord and sultan when he arrived. He had appointed a great and rich emir, a wise and valiant knight and fine warrior, as commander and protector of all his land and of the very large army he had gathered against the Christians, until his son's arrival. This emir's name was Saphadin.[5]

When the king and the host of Christendom saw that they could not cross the river because of the Saracen army encamped on the far side, the king, on the advice of his lords, ordered a causeway to be built out into the River Tanis; it must be strong, broad and high, constructed of timber and earth. This was

intended to divert the water of the Tanis into the channel of the Nile, or at least, by driving the causeway well into the Tanis, to narrow the stretch of water so that it could more easily be bridged to reach the far bank where the Saracens were stationed.

So it was planned, but it was not at all an easy thing to do. The king had two good strong cats[1] built and had his siege-engines, stone-throwers, mangonels, trebuchets and other weapons set up to attack the Saracens who would oppose the crossing. When all this was ready, our men had the cats brought forward to the crossing place. The men bringing earth and timber and the others building the causeway sheltered underneath them. Seeing this, the Saracens set up numerous siege-engines opposite ours, to shatter the cats and the causeway. They hurled such quantities of stones, great and small, that all were astonished. They threw, slung and shot crossbow bolts, they shot Turkish javelins and threw and flung Greek fire.[2] In how many different ways did they attack our engines and the men building the causeway! It was terrible to see, terrible to hear. Stones, javelins, arrows, crossbow bolts and Greek fire flew thick as rain. When the causeway had been laboriously and painfully built out beyond the centre of the stream, at the cost of more blows and in worse danger than most people could easily believe, the Saracens stepped up their attacks so strongly, using relays of men day and night, that they seemed to be starting afresh all over again.

There were three reasons why the causeway could not be carried right across the river: when the river was made narrow like that, the current ran so fiercely through the gap that no material could be held in place, but was swept downstream. That was the first reason. The second was that the Saracens flung so many huge heavy stones against our engines that they shattered almost all of them. The third reason was that together with the great stones aimed at our two cats protecting the causeway-builders, the Saracens shot innumerable darts, arrows and crossbow bolts alight and blazing with Greek fire; the stones smashed the cats and the Greek fire set them alight, and so they were burned to ashes.

While our men were struggling to build the causeway, the Saracens very suddenly and in great strength got across the river and charged in amongst our men from every side. They attacked a section defended by the Hospitallers, and another held by the brothers of Our Lady of the Germans. Both gave them a pitiless welcome. While it lasted it was a great and bitter conflict. Many heroic deeds, many fine blows and feats of courage were performed on both sides. In the end the Turks' double attack was beaten off. Very many were killed. Ours pursued them to the main branch of the Nile, overthrowing and cutting them down. In terror of death, they plunged into the water. Very many Saracens were slain and drowned that day, and great was the loss the unbelievers suffered from their deaths. Many in the host of Christendom said that if our men at the causeway had made an immediate and vigorous attack on the crossing during this conflict and pursuit, they could have got across the river

in spite of the Saracens and would have captured the crossing. The Hospitallers lost eleven of their brothers in this battle. The brothers of Our Lady of the Germans did not lose more than four, but were highly praised and commended that day throughout the host. The battle was fought on the day of the feast of St Sebastian the martyr, which is in January.[1]

After this came the Saturday before Candlemas[2] when a very strong wind blew from the Saracen host down the Nile towards the place where our ships lay at anchor. They took four barges, fastened them together with iron chains, then filled them with tow and straw, dry wood, pitch, wax and other food for flames, set them alight with Greek fire and floated them downstream to burn our ships. But our sailors were quick, active and alert; they ran for staves and boat-hooks and in spite of the wind and the flames streaming towards them and the fire blazing up and spitting in their faces, they thrust them off from our ships and no harm was done.

CHAPTER 64 1250

How the king and the Christians crossed the River Tanis

When the king of France and the commanders of the Christian army realised that the causeway could not be carried right across, for the reasons we told you, they discussed means of crossing the river and fighting the Saracens who were stationed on the far bank to prevent them crossing. They asked Saracen traitors, who had left the unbelievers' army to join ours, whether they knew of any ford. One of these men told the king that there certainly was a ford further down the Tanis; it was rather deep, but he was sure the king would be able to cross there. The king and the barons in council could think of no other way of getting across, and so they agreed to try to use the ford mentioned by the Saracen. Next day was Shrove Tuesday.[3] The king, his three brothers and most of the knights and other men of our host armed and mounted before first light and rode out from the host with their companies arrayed. The king left good men on guard to protect the equipment and troops, both horse and foot, who were left behind. When the king and the others, all on horseback so as to cross the ford, were out in the open, the king commanded all of them generally, great men and small, that no one should dare to break ranks; each man must stay in his own company and the companies must keep close together and all move in an orderly fashion at no more than a walk. When the first contingent had got over the river, they must wait on the bank until the king and all the others had crossed.

When the king had issued these orders and arrayed his companies, the Saracen guided them and they went all together towards the ford which he showed them. Reaching it, they found it much more dangerous than they expected. The banks were very high and the ground on both sides of the river was nothing but marsh, mud and swamp. The water was deeper and more

dangerous than the Saracen had said, and at one point they had to swim the horses. Once they reached the crossing place and the Saracen had shown them the ford, the king had him taken back to our host and given great wealth. The count of Artois and the others who formed the vanguard plunged boldly into the water and courageously got across, with great difficulty and at serious risk to themselves and their horses. The king and all the others crossed after them in the same way. There was not one of them, however good his horse, who was not in great fear of drowning before he got across.

Reaching the far bank, the vanguard disobeyed the king's orders and rode fast upriver as far as the place where the Saracen engines were set up opposite the causeway. Very early in the day and very suddenly they attacked the Saracen forces encamped there, who were expecting no such attack. Some were still fast asleep, others lying in bed. The Saracens on sentry duty were defeated first and almost all put to the sword. Our men charged in through the Turks' quarters, killing all and sparing none; men, women and children, old and young, great and small, rich and poor, they slew and slashed and killed them all. If they found girls or old people hiding for fear of death, it did them no good to shriek and cry and beg for mercy, they were all slaughtered. Saphadin[1] was killed there, commander of the Saracen host, an important and powerful man, along with the others. It was sad indeed to see so many dead bodies and so much blood spilt, except that they were enemies of the Christian faith.

When our men saw that they could do as they wished with the Saracens and that they were all running away, they went foolishly rushing after them without any thought, without any consideration. Brother Giles, grand commander of the Temple, a good knight, valiant, hardy, wise in war and clear-sighted in such matters, advised the count of Artois to halt and rally his men; they should all wait for the king and the other companies which had not yet crossed the river. Brother Giles went on to say that they had achieved one of the finest acts of courage and chivalry seen for a long time in the Holy Land, and then he recommended that they should move out from among the Saracens' engines opposite the causeway; scattered and separated as they were, the Saracens could easily rally and defeat them, as they were so few compared with the Saracens gathered there. A knight with the count of Artois, whose name we do not know, exclaimed,

'There now, there's wolf's fur in that![2] If the Templars and Hospitallers and the men who live here[3] really wanted it, the land would have been conquered long ago.' Others who were there spoke to the count of Artois:

'My lord, don't you see that the Turks are beaten and running? Won't it be wicked and cowardly if we don't pursue our enemies?' The count of Artois, commanding the vanguard, readily agreed to pursue them, and told Brother Giles that if he was afraid, he could stay behind.

'My lord,' Brother Giles answered, 'neither I nor my brothers are afraid. We shall not stay behind, we shall ride with you. But let me tell you that none of us expect to come back, neither you nor ourselves.' While they were talking

like this, ten knights came galloping up to the count of Artois and told him in the king's name not to move, he must wait until the king came up. He answered that the Saracens were beaten and he certainly would not wait, he was going to pursue them.

Instantly they set off after the Saracens in among all the tents, scattering and separating as they hunted them out, keeping to no one path, until they reached a small town called Mansourah. One after another they charged straight in, killing everyone they could catch. The Saracens could hardly believe our men had engaged in so stupid a pursuit, running into such danger and scattering along the streets of this village. They had them at their mercy, as they clearly saw. Horns, trumpets and drums were sounded, promptly they rallied, surrounded our men on every side and savagely they attacked, for their hearts were bitter at the slaughter of their own people which they had witnessed. Ours were at a fatal disadvantage, for they were not together, and their horses were dropping with exhaustion, so much had they raced to and fro among the Turkish tents. The Saracens found them in small groups, easily did what they wanted, slashed and cut and took and bound them and dragged them into captivity. Some fled towards the river to escape death, but the Saracens were on their heels, bringing them down with Danish axes, with maces and swords, and if they reached the river, great, fast and deep, and flung themselves into it, they drowned.

No one ever knew for certain who was killed, taken or drowned in this battle: Robert, count of Artois, brother of the king of France, perished, as did Ralph, lord of Coucy; Roger, lord of Rosoi in *Tieresche*; John, lord of Cherisy; Erard,[1] lord of Brienne in Champagne; William Longsword, earl of Salisbury[2] in England, and all the Templars who were present, so that only four or five Templars survived.[3] Very many of our lords, knights, crossbowmen and mounted sergeants, the most valiant, most hardy, the best of all our host – all these were lost and nothing definite was ever known about them.

When the king and the companies with him had crossed the river, they moved well arrayed and in good order towards the Saracens, but the Saracens, who had defeated our men so terribly, were riding high with pride and did not care a button for the king or all the rest of our army. The moment they saw the king, in great pride, arrogance and strength they rode boldly and fiercely to the attack. Seeing this, the king reflected that those who had led the way had certainly placed Christendom in great danger. He ordered all who were with him to close ranks and keep strictly together. He exhorted them strongly, and told them they must not be afraid of this great number of unbelievers riding towards them, for Our Lord Jesus Christ, for whose sake they were here, was stronger and mightier than any other.

As soon as the Saracens drew near our people, a tremendous noise of horns, bugles and drums broke out, men shouted, horses neighed; it was horrible to see or hear. They completely surrounded our forces and shot dense clouds of bolts and arrows at them; no rain or hail could have caused such darkness.

Very many were wounded, both men and their mounts. When the Turks' first troop had shot off all their arrows and emptied their quivers, they retired and made way for a second troop, more numerous still and shooting even more densely than the others. The king and our men had no crossbowmen with them; all who had crossed the river with the king had been killed in the vanguard, for the Saracens killed without mercy every crossbowman they took. When the king and our men saw that they and their horses were being destroyed, they spurred forward in one massed charge to escape the Turks' arrows. With swords and broadswords they killed and brought down many, but there were such multitudes of Turks that this seemed little or nothing. For every Turk killed, another at once appeared, fresh and vigorous. The Turks saw how severely our men and horses were injured, and they quickly slung their bows over their shields on their left arms, and attacked cruelly with swords and maces. It was amazing to hear and to see how closely they harassed our men on every side. Many of ours who fought in this battle said and affirmed afterwards that if the king had not behaved with such courage and energy, they would all have been taken and killed. Never in this battle did the king turn his face away or try to keep himself safe from the Turks. He exhorted and comforted our people and gave them fresh heart; fiercely did they defend themselves, overwhelmed as they were and subjected to wave after wave of Saracen attack. The struggle continued like this until about none.

The knights and others in our quarters who could see what was happening but could not help because the river was in the way, shouted, wept and yelled aloud. All of them great and small, they beat their breasts, wrung their hands, tugged out their hair, scratched their faces and exclaimed,

'Alas, alas, alas! The king and his brothers and all of them are lost!' Then bravely and very fast the footsoldiers and common people of the host ran to the timber, the engines and other pieces of equipment and began to try to construct some means of getting across so that they could go and help the king. With much trouble and hard work they built a wooden way across the river, and it was dangerous, for the water was deep and ran fast underneath it, and the place itself was dangerous, narrowed as it was by the causeway built out there, so that no one who fell could hope to survive. Soon, with great difficulty and as quickly as they could, they crossed over to help the king. When the Saracens saw them crossing, they broke off, withdrew and retired to their quarters.

In this battle the Saracens lost many men wounded and injured in various ways. Ours, having with God's help won the field, returned to the crossing place. There they had their tents and pavilions pitched and they encamped near the Saracens' engines, of which they found fourteen. They also found plenty of timber, tents, pavilions and other equipment abandoned by the Saracens when the vanguard surprised them. The king stayed there that night with only a few men, but not before the bridge across the river had been properly constructed and very securely built with large beams and solid timber

so that people could cross safely from one force to the other. Next day, Ash Wednesday,[1] the king ordered a bridge of boats to be made so that the river could be crossed safely, and he had some of our troops brought across and quartered near him on that bank. He also commanded that the fourteen engines they had won should be dismantled and the timber used to build a strong stockade all round the host.

On the Friday after Ash Wednesday the Saracens gathered from all sides, coming in such numbers as to cover all the ground. They intended to kill, cut to pieces and drag into captivity all the Christians there. They completely surrounded the stockaded area. As they drew near they poured in, as they always did, such quantities of arrows, bolts, sling stones and stones that some witnesses said they had never in their lives seen hail fall as heavily. In so many ways, so persistently, horribly and dreadfully did they attack our men inside the stockade that men of the country who were there said they had never seen such a bold and violent assault in any part of Outremer. Clearly they thought nothing of dying and did not fear it. As soon as any were weary, others took their place, fresh and vigorous. They hardly seemed human, but like wild beasts, frantic with rage. Ours stood at bay inside the stockade. Wonderfully the king begged and exhorted them to do well. Some Christians in the host said that never in this battle nor in any others before or after did they see the king appear unhappy or anxious or afraid; to look at him he was quite calm and fearless. The Turks and our men hammered at each other with maces, lances, swords, Danish axes, with cutlasses, clubs, daggers and other weapons as if they were striking on rocks, timber or other inanimate objects. When the battle had lasted a long time and the Saracens were exhausted and had done and lost enough, they drew off and retired to their quarters. The Turks lost many more killed and wounded in this battle than we did. After these events the Turks remained quiet for a while, except for skirmishes here and there involving small numbers. Not long after this battle the son of the late sultan, whom he had summoned from the east before he died, arrived with a strong force and joined the Saracen host at Mansourah.[2] The Egyptians received him with great joy, welcoming him with timbrels, flutes, viols, flageolets and other instruments. They accepted him as lord and sultan as they had promised his father, and pledged fealty to him according to the customs of the land. With his arrival the strength and power of the unbelievers was greatly increased.

CHAPTER 65 1250

Sufferings of the king and the Christians at Mansourah

All kinds of Christians must feel great pity, grief and sorrow in their hearts. What happened to the king and to Christendom encamped there at Mansourah, after they had triumphed over the Saracens and taken the river from them by force, can only be spoken of with groans and tears amongst

those who truly love the honour and exaltation of the Christian faith. Almost all these things now befell them against their will: an awful and general mortality and a widespread pestilence that attacked humans and horses while they remained in that place. Hardly a day passed when twenty or thirty biers were not carried to the chapels and churches. Everyone expected to die, no one supposed he could escape. It would have been hard to find one man in all that great host who was not mourning a dead friend, or a single tent or shelter without its sick or dead. Healthy men were only too sure that next day they would be ill or dead. The fit were overwhelmed with the care of the sick. It was no different with the horses. Food supplies had run out, both for men and for horses, throughout the host. The famine was so severe that even healthy men were too thin and weak to help themselves. They ate the flesh of dead horses, donkeys, mules and other army cattle when they could find them and counted it a luxury. Later, when they could get them, they ate much worse things. Anyone who could find a dog or a cat would eat it as a great delicacy. Many of the great men, driven by hunger, would break into a place where they knew someone was alone, eating.

No food could come from Damietta because the new sultan had fifty galleys brought overland on carts and other vehicles, and he put them on the Nile, manned by strong, armed Turks, between our host and Damietta. These harassed our people and prevented any communication by river between our forces and Damietta. This new sultan had already stationed great bands of Turks on the roads, so that no one could travel between our army and Damietta without being taken or killed. The fifty galleys on the river captured many of our vessels which were bringing victuals from Damietta to the host. Besides other damage, there were two especially harmful episodes: our Christians twice sent from Damietta convoys of 150 or more boats, well manned by seamen and armed troops, to bring bread, wine, flour, salt meat and many other things, all desperately needed in the host. As they were moving upriver, Saracen galleys attacked and defeated them. They killed a good many men and took others captive, together with the boats and all their contents. They sent the victuals to the Saracen host, to their great advantage. They took both these convoys like this, one after the other, a serious loss to the Christian army and a great acquisition for the Saracens.

When the king and our people saw and learned of these disasters, which grew worse every day, they were very much perturbed. Men said openly that all was lost. Even those who were fit and able were so disheartened that not one of them made any real attempt to succeed. They said that all the best of our host had been lost with the count of Artois, that the king could not pay the hired troops what he owed them, that many Christians had deserted for lack of food and gone to join the Saracens, and these, they said, were doing most damage to our men. All these things that we have mentioned seriously reduced the strength of the army of Christendom. Almost every day there were skirmishes and attacks, great or small, upon our stockade.

On Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Saturday and Easter Sunday[1] the Saracens mounted as massive and prolonged an attack on our stockade as the one we told you about on the Friday after Ash Wednesday, conducted in just the same way. The king was very much afraid that sooner or later the Saracens would attack so fiercely that they would take them all by force and put every one of them to the sword. Our own men who were with the king, plenty of them, said openly that they did not like this business at all, that they could see God did not approve of it, and if only it were possible they would certainly leave, go home to their own country and not stay in this land any longer.

Because of all these difficulties and the others mentioned above, the king, on his barons' advice, sent envoys to the sultan to ask for a truce. The sultan and the Saracens who were with him made a show of being willing to discuss this, but they had no intention of granting any truce, as later became clear. The sultan, however, said he would like to take advice on this matter, and they should come back on a particular day. Three or four times they made them go and come back again like this. Whenever a truce was mentioned, he would fix a day for taking advice. The Saracens did then leave our people in some sort of peace. When our envoys returned to the sultan for the last time to hear what advice he had chosen, the sultan answered them as follows:

'Let your king and all the Christians with him know for certain that I shall give them no truce. I know their situation better than they suppose. They are all in my power. I shall do exactly as I like with them, for life or for death. Go back and tell them to do the best they can.' When our envoys returned and told the king and barons what the sultan had said, they were all appalled. They could not stay where they were any longer and agreed unanimously to go back to Damietta, if Our Lord would allow it.

CHAPTER 66 1250

How the king and the Christians turned back to go to Damietta and were all captured on the way

Some of the nobles went to the king and advised him privately to mount the best horse he could find, strike in his spurs and get away by land. Others said he ought to go aboard a well-armed galley and reach safety in Damietta by water, if he could, for all the rest were lost. Others advised him to take his brothers[2] with him. But the king and his brothers cut them off short and said they would certainly not do this, they would stay with them, whether to live or die. They strongly urged the king that he at least should go, but he would not be persuaded.

Once they saw that the king would not go, they began to plan how they should all get away. They decided to put all the sick and infirm into boats on the river, with sailors and armed men who would take them downriver to Damietta, if this lay in God's plan. They also decided, after discussion, to leave

most of their tents, pavilions and the stockade undisturbed, so that the Saracens should not immediately realise they had gone. They agreed to leave at night, so as to get away and across the Tanis before the Saracens noticed. It was emphasised that all, on land and water, horse and foot, must keep well together.

Once it was all settled, the king and our people went back across the river and set off for Damietta as they had agreed, like men with a task to perform, one far harder than they knew, in straits that can scarcely be described, in circumstances of overwhelming difficulty.[1] When the Turks saw this, they very quickly crossed the Tanis after them. As soon as they were over the river, they drove in their spurs and rode after our people at great speed. They began to yell and shriek, to whistle and sound drums and timbrels, horns and trumpets; great was the hue and cry they raised in pursuit. They caught them up and completely surrounded them; massive contingents swarmed round in front to head them off. The fifty galleys on the river came fast and attacked those who were on the water. Our men now expected nothing but death, and took heart and courage in themselves. Their sole purpose was to sell their lives dearly. Every time the Turks came within reach, ours attacked with vigour and opened a good broad way among them and were able to pass through. The king had given orders that they must on no account abandon any who were wounded in the Turkish attacks, but must put them in the boats and other vehicles. Repeatedly the Turks harassed them in every way they could; our numbers dwindled and those of the Turks increased. Arrows rained so fast upon our men that their shields and targes, the riders' saddlebows and other equipment were all covered with them. The suffering and distress were such as to astonish the Turks themselves. The king kept reassuring his men and exhorting them to do well, which greatly encouraged them and made them readier to defend themselves.

Harassed like this, they kept moving on until they were within five leagues of Damietta. The sultan saw then that they were not far from the city and was seriously worried that the king and our men might escape him. He had sent word to all the good towns near Mansourah when our men left there, ordering all to come to him, mounted or on foot, so that the faithless dogs who were going away should not escape. His men had come in from all parts. The sultan addressed them and all the others in his host, speaking as follows:

'It is a very great disgrace and great dishonour to such a large number of important, rich and powerful men, to such good and valiant knights, hardy and experienced in all kinds of war, to such good fighting Saracens as we have in our host – for many claim that we have here the pick, the very flower of brave men from all the lands under Muhammad's law – a dishonour, I tell you, that a handful of wretched, miserable Christians, hungry, sick, weak, enfeebled, ill-mounted and few in number, their footsoldiers completely exhausted, should hold out against us so long. I am sure this is due to our faults, to our sins, and that Muhammad is angry with us. Remember how often these men have

destroyed the lands of Muhammad's law, how they have killed fathers and mothers, and then the children! Remember how glad they would be to do the same to us, if only they could, like the dogs and infidels they are, who call Muhammad and his law worthless and speak of it only to mock. If they can get to Damietta, we have lost them. They hold the city, and it is full of their men. Much danger, much harm, will come to all of Muhammad's law if they escape us now.' All this and more he said to them in rebuke, and he rode about among the Saracens' great companies and exhorted them to do well. They all exclaimed and cried out that what the sultan said was true.

The sultan spoke in the same way to the men in the fifty galleys. He ordered all the wounded and injured men and any who could not help themselves, out of the galleys and their places to be taken by fresh and active men. Wherever he thought there were too few armed men, he stationed more, many more, for he had plenty to choose from. The whole country was covered with Turks and they were still pouring in on all sides. Men who were present and saw these things affirmed that the sultan had there in that host at least 300,000 armed Turks.

Then this whole business began again. Great companies of Turks surrounded our men. Ours were taken at a very great disadvantage, for by now they were all exhausted. Many could not stand. From every quarter the Turks launched vehement attacks on them and many died on both sides. Ours could no longer stand up to these constant attacks, company after company of Turks unleashed against them without pause or respite. The Turks began to slaughter and cut them all down, so that the ground was strewn with dead men and spilt blood. The Saracens did whatever they liked with the Christians. Most of them they killed, others they took alive, bound them and dragged them away to prison. The king was taken, and his two brothers, the counts of Poitiers and of Anjou, also the count of Flanders,[1] the count of Brittany,[2] the count of Soissons,[3] and many other leading men and sergeants whose names we cannot give. A good many Christians fled towards our boats, hoping to escape, but the boats had already gone. These men reached the river, plunged in and were all drowned.

Our forces returning by land were all lost as well. Some said that not one single man survived of all those who fought in that last land battle. Our sick and the others on the boats going down the Nile suffered almost as severely. The Saracens in the galleys attacked them, slew and drowned all they could reach and broke up and sank the boats. They rowed their own boats fast downriver after ours which were trying to escape and hurled Greek fire into them. Thus they burned the boats on the river with all the sick and other Christians aboard. In this way all our men returning by water were lost. Some of our vessels did escape, but only very few compared with those which were lost. When the legate of the Church of Rome, Master Odo of Châteauroux, and the patriarch of Jerusalem[1] and the other bishops and prelates in the king's host saw Christendom so confounded, the king advised them to go aboard the boats and they did so. The legate, the patriarch and some others escaped. The

bishop of Langres[2] and many others were killed on the river. The bishop of Soissons[3] refused to leave the king but it is still not known whether he was killed or captured.

Thus by land and water and in various ways were lost all the Christians who had assembled there against the enemies of our faith. And the unbelievers took their tents and pavilions, their horses, weapons and armour, clothes, chalices, books, gold and silver and all their other possessions, including even the king's seal. The enemies of Christendom were richer and such of our Christians as survived much poorer. After Christendom suffered these unhappy events, the sultan had the king and all the other prisoners sent into captivity in different places, some in the Cairo, some in Babylon and others in the good towns of Egypt. There were so many of them that the country's prisons were quite full.

CHAPTER 67 1250

Of the truce which the king and the sultan made together

Soon after the king's capture, the sultan sent men to tell him in fierce and bitter terms, uttering threats, that he must immediately restore Damietta to the sultan in its entirety, just as well provided in every way and as rich in all goods as it was the day the Christians entered it. The king must also repay him all the costs and expenditure he and his father had had to pay out for the war since the Christians landed in Egypt. Furthermore he demanded that the king should return to him all the Saracens held captive by Christians, captured recently or long ago, in the city of Damietta and in the kingdom of Jerusalem, and make good all the harm he and his father had suffered in the war the king had made upon them.

After many words and much discussion a truce was arranged between the king and the sultan in the following terms: the sultan would set free all Christian captives who had been taken since the day the king arrived in Egypt, both in his own land and in the lands of those obedient to him, and all others who had been taken since the day the truce was made between al-Kamil, his grandfather, and Frederick, emperor of Rome,[1] wherever these captives might be, in whatever land they had been captured and whether they were rich or poor, beginning with the king, his brothers and all the nobles. Also under this truce the Christians would retain in peace, freely and without any impediment, all the lands they held in the kingdom of Jerusalem on the day the king landed in Egypt, that is to say, cities and castles, towns, villages and fortresses with all their dependencies; also all the possessions the king and Christians then owned in the city of Damietta; they could take them away and do what they liked with them. Any possessions the Christians, both the king and others, wanted to leave in Damietta would be held in perfect safety under the sultan's guard; and they would be able to take them away where they liked

and when they liked, by land or by water. All Christians who remained in Damietta either because of illness, to sell their goods or to wait for ships, would stay safely in the city and could go away in safety and take all their property with them, by land or sea The sultan undertook to provide them with safe and sure conduct to a Christian land. The sultan must ensure that all these conditions were fulfilled without let or hindrance and was bound to abide by all these undertakings. The king was bound to surrender and make over to the sultan the city of Damietta and eight times one hundred thousand Saracen bezants for his own release, for all the other conditions mentioned above and for the costs, expenditure and damage the sultan and his father and all the others had had in the war. Also the king was obliged to set free all the Saracens in captivity who had been taken in the kingdom of Jerusalem after the truce was made and guaranteed between al-Kamil, the sultan's grandfather, and Frederick, emperor of Rome, as well as all those taken in Egypt from the time the king landed in the port of Damietta. This truce, in the form we have described to you, the sultan promised to keep, on the law of Muhammad according to his law and his custom. The king himself promised the same in the form and manner used by Christians. The king paid the sultan one half of his ransom, that is to say four times one hundred thousand bezants.

When this truce had been confirmed by both parties the sultan at once moved with his whole host and brought the king, his brothers and the nobles who were with him straight towards Damietta, in order to fulfil all the conditions jointly agreed. But one day it happened that when the sultan was staying near Damietta, he rose one morning from table and as he did so was attacked by certain Saracen knights, with the consent and agreement of most of the Saracen army. We do not know for certain why they did this. Some say it was because of the king's ransom, and that they wanted it for themselves. Treacherously attacked and wounded, the sultan ran out of his tent and fled. The others ran hurriedly after him and in front of almost all the emirs of the host and many other Saracens, they struck him with swords, wounded him cruelly, killed him and cut him to pieces. As soon as they had done this, very many Saracens entered the king's tent, still furiously angry and frantic with rage, fully armed, just as if they were going to cut him and the other Christians to pieces like their lord. Plenty of people there were sure this would happen. But as soon as they saw the king, they offered him no violence at all but at once, without delay, asked him for the same truce and alliance he had agreed with the sultan, and that he should immediately give them the city of Damietta.

CHAPTER 68 1250

How the Saracens killed the sultan and the same truce was made between the king and 122 emirs

When they had said enough about this to the king, and he to them, and they had several times sworn and affirmed in strong words and with great oaths that they would keep the same truce and the same agreement with the king as the sultan had made with him, the king and the Christians with him at last agreed to the following terms:

All the emirs in the Saracen host, that is to say 122, swore on the law of Muhammad that they would keep steadfast faith with the king and Christendom and abide by the truce and all the conditions we have already described. The king and his nobles in their turn promised just the same to them as they had done to the sultan. Under this second truce a specific day was named for the surrender of Damietta to the emirs and for all captives on both sides to be set free.

On the agreed day the king surrendered Damietta to the emirs.[1] As soon as this was done, the emirs released the king from captivity, together with his two brothers, the counts of Poitiers and of Anjou. With them were released the count of Flanders and Peter Mauclerc who had been count of Brittany, the count of Soissons and many other lords and knights of the kingdoms of France and of Jerusalem and of the island of Cyprus and other countries.

When these things had been done and the king and all the Christians with him were sure the emirs would steadfastly and faithfully keep the truce and agreement they had sworn to the king, the king chose good and loyal men to remain with the emirs and receive the prisoners. Then the king had his wife the queen brought out of Damietta, together with her sister the countess of Anjou,[2] the countess of Artois,[3] the countess of Poitiers,[4] the duke of Burgundy,[5] and all the other knights and men and women who wanted to come out, bringing all their possessions with them. But there were very few vessels available, so that there was then considerable delay, both for people and for equipment belonging to the king and the others.

When all this was done, the king went aboard his ship, and so did all the others who could find a vessel. Then they left Damietta harbour, put out to sea and sailed straight to Acre. All in that city went to meet the king in a great procession. The clergy were solemnly vested and bore reliquaries and crosses, holy water, censers and other things appropriate to Holy Church. Knights, citizens, sergeants, ladies, girls and everyone else were all as splendidly dressed and adorned as they could manage. All the bells in the town were rung and had been ringing the whole day long from the moment they were seen coming across the sea. They went right down to the harbour where he came ashore in order to meet him and do him honour. Then straight away they led him and those with him to the high church of the city. Many tears were shed in compassion and for joy that the king, his brothers and companions, had been saved from the great blow Christendom had suffered. Then they escorted the king to his residence and all the great men of Acre gave him very handsome gifts, rich and precious.

How the emirs broke the truce, and how wickedly

Once at Acre, the king sent numerous messengers and plenty of ships to fetch the captives and others who had stayed behind, and the sick and the military equipment and other things left in Damietta. When the messengers reached Damietta, the emirs had already gone. They followed them and went on after them to Babylon. They requested in the king's name that the prisoners should be delivered to them, and also all the property belonging to the king and the other Christians, according to the truce they had sworn. The emirs gave them every hope that they would do this, and made them stay a long time in Babylon.

The king's men waited and waited and every day they urgently pressed the emirs to hand over the prisoners and the property and keep their oath. After making them wait a very long time, the emirs handed over a mere 400 prisoners, nothing like the number they held. These were people who could do nothing for themselves, old men, sick or mad; and many were being released for ransom. Many of the 400 soon died. Wickedly and wretchedly these faithless emirs broke the truce they had sworn and guaranteed to the king and to Christendom. They gave back no more than 400 prisoners out of the 12,000 they held. They kept all the property belonging to the king and the Christians who stayed on in Damietta after the king left. They searched the prisons where the captives were held, took the best, strongest and most active young men they found, held naked swords at their throats and heads and compelled them by various torments and much suffering to renounce the Christian faith, and made them believe in the law of Muhammad. There were many who were strong champions of Our Lord Jesus Christ, firmly rooted in faith and belief in him, who refused absolutely in spite of any threats, torment or suffering to renounce the Christian faith and they ended their lives in this world in glorious martyrdom. Those who had remained in Damietta when the king sailed, unable for lack of ships to go with him, and others who had stayed behind on account of their military equipment or to sell property, those too who stayed in the city because of illness, unable to move – all these they put to a cruel death. Some said that they took wicker containers, which were plentiful in the city, enclosed the Christians in them, tied them up tightly, set them alight and cruelly burned them. They said other things too, that the Saracens collected all the wicker containers they could find, dragged them and the bodies of the Christians they had killed and others who were still alive, to a place outside the town, heaped them all up together, set fire to them and burned them to ashes. These faithless men took the crosses and crucifixes they found in Damietta, tied ropes to them and then, jeering and laughing, dragged them about in scorn and mockery. Then they would beat them and afterwards smash them to pieces and villainously trample them under their feet. Many

people said and maintained for certain that if the king and his companions had stayed only a little longer, they could never have escaped with life and limb but would all have been killed and cut to pieces.

When the king's messengers realised that these terrible things were happening, they at any rate accepted the 400 men they were offered. They spoke strongly about all the rest, but nothing they could say or do had any effect. When they saw that they could achieve no more, they went aboard ship with their captives and returned to the king at Acre. They reported everything to the king exactly as it had happened. The king and those with him were so shocked, they could find no words to express it.

At the time his men returned from Egypt with this report, the king was having his fleet prepared and equipped, for he was longing to return to France with the August crossing, which was not far off. But when he knew that the emirs had broken the truce they had sworn and promised under Muhammad's law to observe faithfully, he refused to leave Acre without serious discussion. He summoned all the nobles of France who were there to meet on a particular day, and they decided to send envoys to the emirs telling them to give the king his men back and to keep their sworn oath. The emirs passed these words on to the sultan, and when the sultan heard of it he was very angry and swore emphatically that he would never make a truce with the Christians.

The king asked his nobles what they advised about these events. Almost all agreed on one thing and replied to the king saying so: that as the emirs had broken the truce, his going home to France could only mean the abandonment of the land and the country and the Christians who lived there and were at the mercy of the Saracens. To the captives who still lay blinded and dying of hunger and disease in prison, it would mean the loss of any hope of release. The whole land, they said, would be utterly lost, as well as all those in prison and all the others, if he went away now. All the leading men and almost all the best men had died in the great war in Egypt, so that now the Christians were in such a dangerous situation, so weak, pitiful and unhappy, that those who were left did not have the power to hold the land or defend it, but would all die or be taken captive and the land would be lost. It was still possible, they said, that if the king would stay for some time, the captives in the land might be set free and the cities, castles and towns be kept and the Christians saved; and his staying would benefit Christendom in many other ways.[1] The others said – but there were only a few of them – that it would certainly not be good for the king to stay longer here beyond the sea, for this would put him in great danger, and they would not advise him to do so.

The king fully understood that if he left the land beyond the sea in this situation, he would cause its total loss. He replied and told them that he would not leave the Holy Land at such a juncture but would stay, he would live or die with them. He said too that he would not want to live longer in this world if he were to cause the loss of the land. In no way in the world, he said, would he quit the Holy Land in such danger. Many pitied him and many tears fell when

he said these things.

The king sent his two brothers to France. By them and by the letters sealed with his new seal[2] in which all these events, good and bad, were written down, he sent word to all in France, great and small, rich and poor, and requested and urged them to help him and the Holy Land. Ardently he sought to do the will of Our Lord Jesus Christ, for love of whom he had taken the cross and left the land and kingdom of France of which he was lord and gone to foreign lands and foreign countries. Thus King Louis of France remained in the land beyond the sea and his brothers and the other nobles returned to the land of France.

So it was that Christendom suffered this grievous blow and for the second time the Christians lost the noble and very strong city of Damietta. This was the year of the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ 1250, the month of May, Innocent IV was pope of Rome; Louis, king of France; Henry, king of England; William, count of Holland, was king of Germany, crowned and chosen to be emperor of Rome, and Joel, who had long been archbishop of Tours, was archbishop of Reims.[3]

CHAPTER 70 1250

Of the troubles which befel Christendom in the same year, and of other events in the land beyond the sea

While the king was staying in Acre, messengers came and informed him that Muslim Turkomans[4] had twice in a short period of time laid waste the land of Antioch, which was strongly protected by fortresses and castles. Others came back from Armenia and told the king that unbelieving Muslims were devastating that land and had already almost entirely destroyed it, and had captured and imprisoned the king of Armenia's brother. Others again told him that the Christians of Tripoli had gone out to pillage Saracens and had been defeated with great loss, both of weapons and horses. Others reported to the king that the envoys[1] he had sent to the Saracens and Tartars had returned, and that they had suffered imprisonment in the city of Aleppo. The Old Man of the Mountain, lord of the Assassins, also sent envoys to the king, but we do not know for certain why this was. The great prince of the Greeks, Vatatzes,[2] sent men to him as well, but we do not know why. The king sent his own envoys to this Vatatzes and to the Old Man of the Mountain, accompanying theirs.

Other messengers, important men, arrived in Acre on two occasions, sent by Frederick, former emperor of Rome. Frederick sent them because he wanted to instal his own deputies and sergeants in the city of Acre and throughout the Christian-held territory of Jerusalem.

Other envoys returned and informed the king that the king of Cyprus had married the daughter of the prince of Antioch.[3] The king was very pleased about this.

Envoys from the Egyptian emirs came to see the king and told him as from the emirs that the agreed truce was being observed just as they had promised. The king replied that it was not, that they had broken it, as we described earlier. Words flew to and fro and the king sent his own men to the emirs in Egypt, but we do not yet know what they did.

Others came and reported to the king that great discord and fighting had broken out among the Saracens. When the sultan of Aleppo[4] learned that the Egyptians had killed the sultan, their lord, he immediately summoned his armies, both horse and foot, and sent to all his friends for help. With this huge force he then moved and took Damascus and almost all the cities, castles and towns in the lands of Syria and Jerusalem which were under Egyptian lordship. The sultan of Aleppo, they said, was eager to take his whole strength into the land of Egypt and exact revenge for the death of the sultan, their lord, whom they had murdered. Nor was that all: he wanted to conquer the whole land of Egypt for himself and his heir. Messengers came constantly from all parts to the king in Acre and every day brought him fresh information. The king was unfailingly pleasant, cheerful and resolute.

CHAPTER 71 1250

How some Christian slaves were set free

When the king's two brothers and the other nobles had returned to France, the ruler of Babylon and Egypt[5] and the other emirs sent back to the king in Acre some of the Christians they were holding captive. These were: the master of the Hospital[1] and 25 knights Hospitallers, fifteen Templar knights, ten knights of the Hospital of the Germans, 100 lay knights and 600 other prisoners, both men and women. Then the king sent envoys and rich gifts and some 300 Saracen slaves to the rulers in Egypt, who welcomed them with delight, and in return sent the king about four-score and ten enslaved Christian knights and 2200 men and women, as well as an elephant, a wild ass and rich and precious gifts; but these were by no means all the Christian captives. The king paid out large sums of money to buy Saracen captives from their Christian owners in order to send them to the Egyptian rulers so that they should send the Christian captives back to him. He spent heavily in order to support knights and crossbowmen, and to send his envoys to the sultans and receive theirs.

CHAPTER 72 1251

How the Egyptian commanders and the men of the country defeated the sultan of Aleppo

Meanwhile the sultan of Aleppo had gathered a large army and had taken the kingdoms of Damascus and Jerusalem from the Egyptians, except for the areas

held by Christians. He was anxious to avenge the death of the sultan of Egypt and to conquer that kingdom for himself and his heir. Now he led his army across the deserts between Syria and Egypt until he reached the Egyptian border. Here he was cut off from all supplies by the Bedouins, and was in serious trouble. The Egyptian commander[2] gathered his troops and advanced with a large army to meet the sultan of Aleppo and his men on the border. Very early on Candlemas morning[3] the two armies met. They fought a fierce battle in which many were killed or captured. In the end the Egyptians were defeated and fled. The Bedouins came running for their arms and armour and carried it off. Towards evening the Egyptians regrouped, arrayed their companies, attacked the men of Aleppo and fought them again. At last the invaders were overwhelmed and fled. In this battle the sultan of Aleppo lost nearly all his emirs and about 24,000 fighting men killed or captured. The Bedouins raced in and took all the Aleppan armour and gear; in this way the Bedouins gained the whole military equipment of two armies.

CHAPTER 73 1251

How the king was released from his oath to the emirs

Seeing that the Egyptians were certainly not keeping the truce they had made with him and with Christendom, the king summoned the legate, the prelates, nobles and wise men, clerk and lay, to a meeting in his presence. He recalled the conditions of the truce and how they had been settled between himself and the sultan of Babylon, later murdered, and subsequently with the 122 Egyptian emirs, and he asked whether the emirs had properly observed the truce, whether he himself had broken it in any way, and if the emirs had done so. They discussed this among themselves and replied that the emirs had not kept the terms of the truce or their sworn word but had most grievously and treacherously broken them; never had they kept them as they ought but broke their oaths every day. They said they could not see any way in which the king had not well and faithfully kept them, as he ought to do and was still doing. The king requested the legate to release him from the oath he had sworn to the emirs. The legate asked the advice of the prelates and wise men who were present. They replied that as the emirs were not keeping the truce, neither ought the king or Christendom to do so. When the legate had received this advice and the matter had been thoroughly discussed by all present, he released the king from his oath to the emirs and declared that the king and Christendom were in no way bound to keep the truce with the Saracens, as the Saracens were not keeping it. Thus the king and Christendom now had no truce with any Saracens.

CHAPTER 74 1251–52

Of the truce between the new sultan and the king and how all the Christian slaves were freed and the heads returned[1]

After these events, when winter was over and March came, the king gathered his men and took his army to Caesarea in Palestine, which is on the sea. He lodged there and had the town enclosed with ramparts, ditches and sixteen towers.

During his stay there he sent envoys to the new sultan of Babylon,[2] requiring him to make good his and the emirs' infringements of the truce. While the king was at Caesarea he received envoys from the sultan of Aleppo[3] offering to make a truce with himself and with Christendom. But the terms he offered did not please the king or Christendom, and so no truce was made and the envoys went away with nothing done.

The sultan of Babylon and Egypt and the other sultans of the land were very anxious, fearing that Christians would send the king substantial help and would return to Damietta and the kingdom of Egypt, conquer them and take the land. They considered this, and went to Damietta, where they demolished all the ramparts, razing them to the ground, and, in order to prevent the Christians ever making use of the city, they took all the stones and carried them to the River Nile. The envoys from the king to the new sultan of Egypt returned, and the new sultan sent his own envoys to the king. Messages went to and fro until a truce was settled between the king and the Christians on one side and the new sultan on the other. This latest truce guaranteed the release of all captive Christians in Babylon, the Cairo and all the strongholds under Egyptian control; and the new sultan wrote off the 4000 Saracen bezants of the ransom which he said the king owed him. The truce included one condition which was quite new in Christian or Saracen truces: all renegade Christians, converted willingly or by force, were given leave to go freely back to the king and to Christendom. This truce bound the new sultan to return the Holy Land of Jerusalem to the king and to Christendom, as well as the city of Bethlehem, the land of holy Abraham,[1] the city of Nablus, all Galilee and all the land on this side of the River Jordan, except for some unfortified towns which the sultan kept so that he could travel through them on his way to the kingdom of Damascus. As soon as this was settled, the king and his host removed and went to Jaffa, where he had the town enclosed with ramparts, towers and ditches.[2]

CHAPTER 75 1252–54

How the truce was not observed and the king returned to France

Very hopeful were the king, the legate and the Christians that the holy Promised Land would soon be given back to them as we have described, but the Saracens did nothing of the sort. The king sent numerous envoys to the

sultan, and so did the sultan to him, but it all came to nothing. They did nothing whatever about returning the Holy Land as they had agreed.

The king and the Christians became very apprehensive when they realised that the sultan had no intention of keeping the agreement. The king had no troops with him whom he could have used to put things right, nor did anyone bring him news of likely help or support from any quarter. He discussed matters with the prelates and other nobles and decided, on their unanimous advice, to appoint Sir Geoffrey of Sergines to stay in the Holy Land. The king would provide him with money to maintain knights, crossbowmen and sergeants, mounted and on foot, to defend the land against the Saracens. The king himself would go back to France, as he could get no reinforcements.

The king did just as we have said: he had his ship prepared, took his wife the queen, who was pregnant, and the two children she had given birth to beyond the sea, one in Damietta, the other in Acre,[3] returned to France and was welcomed on the eve of Lady Day in September with a great and solemn procession, for everyone thought they had lost him.[1] This was the year of the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ 1254; Innocent IV was pope of Rome; Louis of whom we have spoken was king of France; William, count of Holland, king of Germany; Henry [III], king of England; Theobald was count of Champagne, lord of Brie and king of Navarre; Nevelon of Basoches was bishop of Soissons;[2] Jerome of Coucy, abbot of St Medard;[3] and John was count of Soissons.[4]

CHAPTER 76 1255

How the Christians made a truce with the sultan after the king left, and how it was broken

Once the king had left the land beyond the sea, as we have just said, it was not long before the new sultan of Babylon and Egypt and the sultan of Damascus[5] and the Saracens on the one side and the lords of the Christians' territory with the Temple and the two Hospitals on the other agreed upon a truce to run for ten years, ten months and ten days. Jaffa castle was excluded from this truce.[6]

The following Christmas my lord Geoffrey of Sergines and a great company of Christians met in this castle for the very reason that it was not included in the truce, whereas all the other Christian-held lands were, so that they could not attack the Saracens from any base but Jaffa. When they had all gathered, they sent scouts out into Saracen country to discover where they could gather the richest plunder. Then on the Wednesday after Christmas they armed themselves, mounted and went out very quietly, on horseback and on foot, and rode all night. Reaching a point between Gaza and Ascalon, they saw that this was the moment to attack the Saracens. They swept through the villages and collected men, women and animals, large and small, and returned fast to Jaffa, in the best of health. They lost only one man, a Turcopole who was killed, and

they won and shared out among themselves 400 slaves, not counting the ones they killed, 800 or more. They also gained 10,000 smaller beasts and at least 1000 head of large cattle, mostly oxen and camels.

The Saracens instantly informed the sultan of all the events we have just described. The sultan sent word immediately to the emir of Jerusalem, telling him to summon the other emirs from all around there, and plenty of fighting men; let them go and lay siege to Jaffa and do them all the damage they could. The emir did so. He brought a very strong force to besiege Jaffa, and quartered his men in the place called Toron des Chevaliers,[1] where the men inside Jaffa could see them clearly. Often they saw them coming right up to the city walls, but they did not dare move, as they were few in number, feared an ambush, and dreaded losing the castle.

The Saracens remained there some time. Then they realised that the Christians were not going to come out and sent a detachment into Christian-held territory. This force rode out and overran the lands of Christians, who, because of the truce, were not expecting anything of the kind. They roamed at will across the country and all came back safe and sound, laden with plunder, to the Saracen army encamped before Jaffa. The emir of Jerusalem took all the prisoners, a good hundred of them, Templars, Hospitallers and sergeants. This raid won them an estimated 40,000 or more beasts, large and small, which they certainly did not want to send to the sultan, as they thought they would have to be returned, all the Christians of that area being included in the truce.

CHAPTER 77 1256

How the Christians defeated Saracens, who were not in the truce, outside Jaffa

After this the Saracens kept offering provocation, often sweeping right up to the walls of Jaffa. The Christians inside Jaffa agreed that they were not going to put up with this. They posted a strong garrison to hold the castle, whatever might happen to the men going out to fight the Saracens, and on the Friday before mid-Lent, when the Saracens came skirmishing up to Jaffa, the Christians, alert and ready, had the gates opened and at once rode out to do battle. Fiercely they yelled and shouted, crying out,

'Kill! Kill! Kill!'

A great and wonderful conflict it was, but the Saracens lost men killed, broke under the attack and fled. Some said at the time that every Saracen there would have been killed or captured if only the count of Jaffa[2] had not fallen. He would have been killed if the Hospitallers had not rescued him, but the Saracens captured his horse.

Then my lord Geoffrey of Sergines pursued them all the way to their encampment; his knights clustered round him and advised him to return for fear of an ambush. My lord Geoffrey and the Christians with him then rode

back to Jaffa. They counted 2000 Saracens killed or taken in this battle, and of the Christians, twenty sergeants and one knight. Yet the Christians had only had 200 mounted men and about 300 others, crossbowmen, archers and sergeants.

Among others killed in the battle were the emirs of Jerusalem and Bethlehem. The Saracens reported their defeat to the sultan at Damascus and told him that the Christians had got these two emirs' heads. The sultan sent a letter to an emir in the Saracen host, telling him to redeem the head of the emir of Jerusalem. The emir sent promptly to my lord Geoffrey of Sergines: he was to send him the head of the emir of Jerusalem and would receive in return the count of Jaffa's horse and 10,000 Saracen bezants. My lord Geoffrey sent back to say that even if he gave him a whole tower full of bezants and horses, he would certainly not return the head. The emir reported this reply to the sultan at Damascus and when the sultan heard it he was furiously angry and swore that he would never make truce with the Christians.

CHAPTER 78 1256

How the Bedouins took a good two parts of their plunder from the Saracens and how the truce was re-established

The Bedouins up in the mountains heard that the Saracens had won rich plunder from the Christians. They said they would like a share of it, and came down from the hills into the Saracen host where the plunder was kept. They told the emir whom the sultan had put in command of the army that they wanted a share of their plunder. He said they certainly could not have any, as they had not helped to win it. The Bedouins attacked, fought and went off with at least two parts of the livestock, whoever might be sorry. Three thousand or more Bedouins and Saracens were killed in this conflict.

The Christians discussed these events and sent envoys to the sultan in Damascus: he should make good the harm he had done the Christians and restore the truce he had broken; after that let the truce be reinstated as before, if that was what he wished; if not, let it be war.

Words and messengers went from the sultan to the Christians and from the Christians to the sultan. In the end the sultan gave way to the Christians sufficiently for my lord Geoffrey of Sergines, the count of Jaffa, the other lords of Christian territories, the Temple and the two Hospitals on the one side, and the sultan of Babylon and Egypt and the sultan of Damascus on the other to agree to a renewal and confirmation of the truce on the same terms as before, to run for ten years, ten months and ten days. This was the year of the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ 1256.

CHAPTER 79 1256–58

How the Christians fought each other

When this truce had been renewed and confirmed and the Christians were not at war with the Saracens, except for Jaffa castle which was excluded from the truce, the Christians began to make shameful and wretched war on each other, both sides being equally aggressive. Discord broke out between the Venetians, the Pisans and the *Poulains*[1] of the land on the one hand, and the Genoese, the brothers of St John's Hospital who supported them, and the Spaniards on the other. This was over a building standing by the sea between Genoese and Venetian territory,[2] and the fighting went on for nearly a year. They slew and slaughtered and did each other all the harm they could, just as they did to Saracens.

The prince of Antioch was informed of this and went at once to Acre. He took with him a nephew of his who ought, so the prince said, be heir, lord and king of the land as being descended from Count Walter of Brienne. He was not the count's own son but the son of his heirs.[3] The prince brought the child's mother, the queen of Cyprus, with him as well, and hoped to bring peace to the land if he could find any way to do so. Having reached Acre, the prince, in his nephew's name, summoned all the knights of the country who held of the kingdom of Jerusalem and the masters of the religious houses to meet on a certain day in Acre.

They attended, and in his infant nephew's name the prince required them to do homage to the child as to the heir and lord of the kingdom of Jerusalem. They said they would consider this, and after some discussion the master of the Temple, the master of the Hospital of the Germans and the knights of the country who held of the kingdom, together with the Venetian and Pisan communes, did homage to the child, reserving all rights. But the master of St John's Hospital, the Genoese commune and the Spaniards said they certainly would not do homage, because the child was not heir to the land. Conrad's son was heir, they said, because Conrad was son to the daughter of King John of Acre, who was the true heir of the land.[4] Seeing this disagreement and realising that he could not put a peaceful end to this war, the prince decided to appoint a regent in his infant nephew's name. He appointed the lord of Arsur[5] regent of the land and at his own expense he hired 800 French troops, present in the country, to support him for one year. The prince ordered him to harass the Hospitallers, the Genoese commune and the Spaniards to his utmost power, if they did not submit; and he was not to spare the prince's funds, he should be well supplied. After this the prince went back to his own land, as he was unable to pacify these Christians, so deplorably at war with each other.

After the prince left Acre the conflict became more bitter and more shocking still. Four score or more ships were burned during the year it lasted, all of them laden with goods, wealth and merchandise coming into the port of Acre. And all that year there were at least sixty engines, every one of them throwing down onto the city of Acre, onto houses, towers and turrets, and they smashed

and laid level with the ground every building they touched, for ten of these engines could deliver rocks weighing as much as 1500 pounds, weight of Champagne. This meant that nearly all the towers and strong houses in Acre were destroyed, except for religious houses, twenty thousand men died in this war on one side or the other. The Genoese and the Spaniards, however, suffered most defeats by land and sea, and they surrendered all the towers they held in the city of Acre; these were tom down to the ground. They passed under the swords of the Venetians and Pisans and by the peace terms went away to the city of Tyre. The city of Acre was as utterly devastated by this war as if it had been destroyed in warfare between Christians and Saracens. This was the year of the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ 1258.

CHAPTER 80 1258–60

How the Cumans defeated the Tartars, and the castles which the Christians garrisoned against them

News came next to the city of Acre and its neighbourhood that the Tartars had divided their people into three armies and that one of these had gone to the land of *Comenie*.[1] As it approached its borders, the Cumans said they would play all for all and would fight them. The Cumans gathered, arrayed their companies and encountered the Tartars. A bitter and bloody battle followed, and only a few men in these two large armies escaped death or capture. In the end, however, the Tartars were defeated and they fled as fast as they could, abandoning their equipment and trying to hide in trees and bushes. Some got away but nearly all were killed or taken.

The second army was on its way to Syria and had already conquered and subdued the kingdom of Persia, the noble and mighty city of Baghdad and all that territory, had killed the caliph,[2] who was called the Saracens' pope, had conquered the land of the Medes, that of Assyria, of Chaldea, of Turkey, Edessa, Aleppo, Hama, Horns, great Caesarea,[1] the land of the Old Man of the Mountain[2] and many other lands, provinces and kingdoms which all belong to the Saracens, and the lands of Georgia and Armenia and the city of Antioch, which belong to Christians.[3]

There was scarcely a land in all the country, near or far, which they did not conquer, utterly destroy or hold in subjection through huge exactions of gold and silver, of men and women and many other forms of slavery, so that they would all have been better dead.

Only a very few Christians now remained free of Tartar dominion in the whole land of Syria. These few Christians took counsel together and said that never, please God, would they submit to the Tartars. As they were now so close, they said, almost the entire land was lost except for some strong castles, and they decided to put the strongest of these into a state of defence. The Templars would garrison seven of their strongest castles, the Hospitallers two,

the Hospitallers of Our Lady of the Germans one, and all would share in the defence of the cities of Acre and Tyre. They saw clearly that the whole land could never hold. These castles which were put into a state of defence gave them a great deal of trouble, as they could not find any hired troops who would garrison them unless they were paid the money they wanted. The soldiers said they were taking money to be killed and die, as they could see no way of escaping the huge number of advancing Tartars.

CHAPTER 81 1260

How the Saracens heavily defeated the Tartars and how the Tartars fled

The sultans of Babylon and Egypt and of Damascus[4] were very much alarmed, as were all the Saracens, when they heard this news. The sultan summoned all his fighting men, and committed the defence of his land to an emir he supposed to be loyal to him – but very disloyal he proved in the end.[5] The sultan and his host set off, crossed the deserts between Egypt and Syria and reached Damascus. Saracens from all around came in to join him; five sultans were present, so it was said. They discussed the situation, and sent word to the Christians asking them to join them in the fight against the Tartars.

The Christians considered this, and most of them agreed to fight on the Saracens' side. But the master of the Hospital of Our Lady of the Germans[6] said this would certainly not be wise, because they had often discovered, and very recently too, that the Saracens never kept any truce or agreement with the Christians as they should, but frequently broke them. If they fought alongside the Saracens against the Tartars and the Tartars were defeated, any Christians who survived such a battle would be exhausted, as would their horses; then if this huge number of Saracens suddenly attacked them, all the surviving Christians would be taken or killed. In this way all the land held by Christians would be utterly lost.

All agreed when they heard this, and they sent a reply to the sultan saying they would not join them in battle, but they could be quite sure that no harm would come to them from the Christians, who would on the contrary help and support them with food supplies and safe conduct, and they need not be on their guard against Christian attack. When the sultans heard this answer, they readily agreed to it and said that this was certainly no reason to postpone battle, as they had plenty of men. They arrayed their companies and made straight for the Tartars, who were said to be near Sidon.

As the Saracens came near the Tartars and saw their moment, they arrayed their ranks for battle and attacked. They charged with great vehemence, and were met by a fierce defence. Such masses of men fought on one side and on the other, it was a wonder to see. Long and bloody was the battle, and many died on both sides. At last the Tartars were beaten and conquered.[1] On three separate days they fought like this, in three places, and all three times the

Tartars were defeated. One hundred thousand Tartars died in these battles, so it was estimated. After this third battle the Tartars fled and no one ever knew what became of them. Some said they had fled as far as a very distant place known as Cold Waters, and that they had informed their lord of this great defeat and asked him to send help, as nearly all of them were dead.

CHAPTER 82 1260–61

How the Egyptians murdered their lord the sultan, and how Christians came back from Jerusalem in great distress

When the land was cleared of Tartars, the Saracens went away and returned to their own countries. The sultan of Babylon, through whose efforts this task had been accomplished, went back to Egypt.[2] The emir[3] he had left in charge of his land had made great plots and conspiracies against him. All was safe and at peace, so he thought, but very soon he was murdered and the Saracens of that country made another sultan. It was said that they chose as lord that same emir who had murdered the other sultan. The Christians were not at all pleased, as they had a truce with him. But when he was murdered and dead, the truce ceased and the whole land was at war, so that Christians who had gone on pilgrimage to Jerusalem lost many of their people and much property, for when the emir in charge of the city heard of the sultan's murder, he had the city gates closed and strongly guarded so that no one could go in or out without his permission. Christians who had entered the city on pilgrimage were quite unable to leave it for a long period, but were detained there, because they would not allow anyone to leave.

The Christians persevered and in the end, after much suffering, were allowed to go. As best they could and amid great dangers they returned all together to the Christians' territory by the sea They were often attacked on the way and lost many of their people and possessions, and it was said for certain that all these attacks on them were made on the orders of the emir of Jerusalem, to whom they had paid considerable sums, and by whose leave and safe-conduct they had gone to the Holy Sepulchre. With great difficulty and much trouble they returned from there. When the Christians saw them, they were all delighted and full of joy, for so much had happened to them, and with a loud voice they gave praise and thanks to Our Lord Jesus Christ and to his glory. There were then 1261 years since the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Notes

1. Frederick II Hohenstaufen (1194–1250), crowned emperor in the West 1220, active in the East 1228–29.
2. In 1218–19 during the Fifth Crusade.

3. See *Eracles, RHC Occ.*, vol. 2, p. 339.
4. Reynald of Haifa.
5. This occurred in 1229.
6. 2 October 1187.
7. Really about thirteen.
8. Of Augustinian canons.
9. Luke 22:14.
10. Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36; John 20:19.
11. John 20:26.
12. Luke 24:51; Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9.

1. Acts 2.
2. Benedictines.
3. 'Of the Lord'; see below, chapter 6.
4. The Armenian cathedral; St James the Great, son of Zebedee; 'of Galicia' refers to St James' supposed grave in Santiago de Compostela.

1. Rights and lefts depend how the pilgrim is facing. The bell-tower and Trinity chapel lay west of the courtyard.
2. Now referred to as the 'aedicule', 'the little building', housing what was left of the tomb discovered by St Helen.
3. This word is left untranslated, as it means both the head end of a bed or couch and the apsidal end of a church. The author must mean the altar at the extreme west of the church, beyond the aedicule.
4. See below, p. 19.

1. 'Crucified. He is risen, he is not here. There is the place where they laid him.' Matthew 28:6.
2. Helen, c. 250–330, mother of the emperor Constantine.
3. 'Shaved' translates *eschauvoit*, which the writer derives from the Latin *calvus* and links with the word 'Calvary'. 'Calvary' does derive from *calvus*, but only by way of *calvaria*, 'a skull", which is a translation of the Greek *golgotha*, 'a skull'; see Matthew 27:33. This ingenious back-formation no doubt contributed to the idea put forward by John of Würzburg, pilgrim c. 1170, who says that at the time of Christ in the Place of a Skull the heads of condemned criminals were shaved and their hair cut off; J. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage, 1099–1185* (London, 1988), pp. 257–8).

1. It seems that the Precious Gates gave access to the Temple enclosure from the town. The Golden Gates were in the external wall behind the Temple, leading east.
2. The al-Aqsa mosque.
3. The Temple 'of the Lord', the Dome of the Rock, under the Crusaders a church served by Augustinian canons.
4. In fact octagonal.
5. James, son of Alphaeus, sentenced by the Sanhedrin to be stoned in AD 62.
6. John 8.
7. 2 Chronicles 2.
8. John 12:12.
9. 14 September.
10. This relic was taken by Chosroes II in 614 and brought back in 629 by the Byzantine emperor, Heraclius (c. 575–642).

1. See Wilkinson, *op.cit.*, p.43.
2. Jordan.
3. Acts 7:59.

1. 'South' supplied from the *Chronique d'Ernoul et de Bernard le Trésorier*, ed. L. de Mas Latrie (Paris, 1871), p. 200.
2. Matthew 27:5.
3. John 9.
4. John 9:7.
5. Matthew 26:75; Mark 14:68; Luke 22:61; John 18:27.

1. In 1186 Germain had the choked-up well near the Spring of Siloam dug out and water brought up by a continuous circle of wheel-mounted pots, worked by horse-power; see the description in *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, trans. & ed. Peter W. Edbury (Aldershot, 1996), p. 16.
2. Matthew 27:7; Acts 1:19.
3. This tradition refers to the capture of Jerusalem in 615 by Chosroes II when 20,000 Christians died. See Wilkinson, pp. 202,307.
4. *Anegie* represents Abasgia, i.e. western Georgia, on the Black Sea; *Femenie* refers to the land of

women, the Amazon legend. In the opening lines of his *Knight's Tale* Chaucer speaks of 'the land of Femenye, that whylom was ycleped Scithia'.

1. 'The blood and water flowed… onto the head of Adam and washed away all the sins of the human race', Saewulf, pilgrim c. 1102, in Wilkinson, p. 128; see also pp. 36, 102, 259 for a dissenting view. Professor Folda writes: 'Not all crucifixes made in the holy land have Adam's skull at the foot of the Cross but many do, and it is a regular feature of middle Byzantine iconography as well. For Crusader examples, see H. Buchthal, *Miniature Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Oxford, 1957), plates 56, 57.' (Private communication.)
2. Emmaus Fontenoid, now Abu Ghosh; see Wilkinson, pp. 71–3 for different sites identified as Emmaus.
3. Luke 24:13.
4. Kedron, John 18:1.
5. Bethany was in open country 2.5 kilometres east of Jerusalem.

1. The Pool of Bethesda, John 5:4.
2. Matthew 26:47; Mark 14:43; Luke 22:54.
3. Matthew 26:36; Mark 14:32; Luke 22:44.
4. Augustinian canons.
5. Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2.
6. Matthew 21:19; Mark 11:13&20.
7. Marie 11:1–10.
8. In the text: *Boavinz*. This must refer to a church or monastery for the use of Christian Arabs in Jerusalem. See Anna-Dorothee v. den Brincken, *Die 'Nationes Christianorum Orientalium' im Verständnis der Lateinischen Historiographie* (Cologne, 1973) p. 188.

1. Acts 7:59.
2. Genesis 22:1–14.
3. Luke 23:43.
4. Matthew 27:26; Mark 15:15.
5. See above, chapter 4.
6. Saewulf, pilgrim c. 1102 (before the crusaders extended the church), in Wilkinson, p. 103: 'Outside the church of the Holy Sepulchre but within its surrounding walls, is the place called Compas, where our Lord Jesus Christ with his own hand marked and measured the centre of the world.'
7. Matthew 28:9; Mark 16:9; John 20:14.

1. See the moving account of Daniel the Abbot, pilgrim from Russia c. 1107, of the coming of the holy fire, Wilkinson, pp. 166–70; also the report of the pilgrim Theoderic (1164–74), Wilkinson, p. 283.
2. Matthew 27:55; Mark 15:40; Luke 23:49; John 19:25.
3. 'The holy of holies', 1 Kings 6:16. Pilgrims used to go for confession to a cave below the Dome of the Rock in which Jesus was said to have forgiven the woman taken in adultery.
4. Genesis 22:9. Perhaps the stump of a column, resembling an altar.
5. Numbers 17:7; Deuteronomy 31:26.
6. Genesis 28:12.
7. 1 Chronicles 21:15.
8. Luke 2:25.
9. Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist, Luke 1:11.
10. John 7:11.
11. Perhaps a version of the events in Luke 4:29–30, or John 8:59.
12. 'I saw water flowing from the right side of the Temple.' Ezekiel 47:1, anthem sung at High Mass during Eastertide.
13. Matthew 4:5; Luke 4:9. This 'pinnacle' was the surviving south-east comer of Herod's wall around the Temple area.
14. See above, chapter 6.
15. The Old Testament prophet; Matthew 23:35.

1. Acts 3.
2. See above, chapter 9.
3. The Pool of Bethesda, John 5.
4. First mentioned by name in the second-century apocryphal Gospel of St James.
5. Perhaps third century, martyred in Asia Minor.
6. Acts 2.
7. Matthew 26:20; Mark 14:18; Luke22:14; John 13.
8. See above, chapter 2.

9. The northern slope of the Mount of Olives.
10. Matthew 28:9; Mark 16:9.
11. The hall of judgement, John 18:28 & 33.
12. See above, chapter 7.

1. See above, chapter 8.
2. See above, chapter 7.
3. King of Judah in the ninth century BC.
4. 'Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me', Matthew 26:39.
5. An actress who died a penitent in a cave on the Mount of Olives.
6. Matthew 26:6.
7. John 11.
8. Matthew 4. 'Quarantaine', a forty-day period, but here applied to a place, a mountain and castle near Jericho.
9. A defensible camp for pilgrims visiting the Place of Baptism.
10. Thirty-nine kilometres north-east of Jerusalem.
11. South, to Kerak of Moab, a castle in the Transjordan.
12. Shawbak, another major castle.

1. 'Glory to God in the highest', Luke 2:9–14.
2. Genesis 18.
3. Luke 1:40.
4. Luke 1:57.
5. See above, chapter 8.
6. John 4:7.
7. Genesis 22:9.
8. Matthew 14:10. A tomb and 'ashes of St John' were shown at Sebastea and a tradition grew up that he had been beheaded there.
9. Matthew 17:2.
10. Luke 7:11.
11. John 21:12.
12. Matthew 14:15; Mark 6:41; Luke 9:12; John 6:5.
13. Luke 1:26.

1. See the apocryphal Gospel of St Thomas.
2. John 2:1.
3. An Orthodox monastery still in existence.
4. 15 August; 8 September.

1. There are several versions of this prophecy, whose author is also described as 'Isaac, son of Hannan'. Written in Arabic, probably at Damietta early in 1220 by a Nestorian Christian, a Syrian, it was warmly welcomed by the legate Pelagius, who quickly had it translated. It announces the imminent downfall of Islam and the Christian recapture of Jerusalem. See P. Pelliot, 'Two Passages from "La Prophétie de Hannan, fils d'Isaac", in *Prester John, the Mongols and the Ten Lost Tribes*, ed. C.F. Beckingham and B. Hamilton (Aldershot, 1996), pp. 113–37.
2. For the author's own interpretation of some of the following prophecies, see below, page 28.

1. A reference to King Amaury of Jerusalem (1163–74), who sacked the Egyptian city of Bilbeis and massacred the inhabitants in 1168.
2. Saladin.
3. His brother al-'Adil, 'Saphadin'.
4. This term was often used to mean all the non-Christian country east of the Jordan.
5. Jerusalem surrendered to Saladin on 2 October 1187.

1. Acre, which had fallen to Saladin in July 1187, was besieged by forces from the Latin East and the Third Crusade from August 1189 until July 1191. Philip II Augustus of France, the first of the kings alluded to here, joined the siege on 20 April 1191 and Richard I of England, the second king, arrived before the beleaguered city early in June.
2. Probably a reference to the papal legate, Cardinal Pelagius of Albano.
3. The Fifth Crusade laid siege to Damietta in May 1218 and captured the city in early November 1219.

1. 'Egypt' is a Greek word, meaning not known; the native name for the country was *Kimet*, 'black', referring to the colour of the soil.
2. Probably Qus, just north of Luxor, and Aswan, still further up the Nile, important trading centres.

1. Ralph of Merencourt was patriarch from 1215 to 1224; but this letter seems not to be what it claims. Innocent III died in 1216, while the death of al-'Adil, mentioned in the letter, was in 1218. But the

letter is clearly not much later than 1218 and must have originated in the context of the Fifth Crusade.

2. Al-'Adil Sayf al-Din, died 1218.
3. Al-Zahir Ghazi, died 1216.
4. The names as given here are evidently garbled. Al-'Adil Sayf al-Din had at least nine sons, including: al-Kamil Muhammad (d. 1238), al-Mu'azzam Isa (d. 1227), al-Ashraf Musa (ruler in the Jazira and then Damascus, d. 1237), al-Auhad Ayyub (ruler of Diyar Bakr, d. 1210), al-Muzzaffar Ghazi (ruler in the Jazira, d. 1244), al-Fa'iz Ibrahim (d. 1220), al-Hafiz Arslan (ruler of Qal'at Ja'bar, d.c. 1242) and al-'Aziz Uthman (ruler of Banyas, d. c. 1233).

1. Al-Kamil Muhammad.
1. Al-Mu'azzam Isa.
3. Mesopotamia.
1. The name derives from an Arabic word meaning 'eaters of hashish', but this author does not mention drug-induced visions of paradise.
1. This word is often translated 'mosque', but the Dome of the Rock, a holy place of Islam, has never been a mosque.
1. Born posthumously to Theobald III and Blanche of Navarre in 1201, he inherited Navarre in 1234; died 1253.
2. A son of Robert, count of Dreux, he became count of Brittany by marriage; resigned Brittany to his son in 1237; died 1250.
3. John of Braine.
4. As a young man he took command of Albigensian crusade when his father Simon was killed in 1218, but without success; was captured at Gaza in 1239; later freed, he died of dysentery in Italy in 1241.
5. Hugh IV, duke 1218–72.
6. Henry II, count 1214–739.
7. William, count 1223–55.
8. Henry, count 1231–87.
9. Louis, count 1218–68.
10. Regent of France 1270, died 1280.
11. Lord of Ailli.
12. Robert.
13. Married Alice, queen of Cyprus, but later returned to France.
14. Captured at Gaza in 1239.
15. Lord of Bernai.
16. Died 1249.
17. William, died on this campaign.
18. Or of Charny, see below, chapter 28.
19. Captured at Gaza.
20. Lord of Rosny.
21. Captured at Gaza.
22. Born the second son of King John in 1209, he became the brother-in-law of Frederick II, was elected king of the Romans in 1257, and died in 1272.

1. In September 1239.
1. Riccardo Filangieri at Tyre.
2. Al-Nasir Dawud of Kerak in Moab commanded this attack. Runciman dates the surrender to 7 December 1239; *A History of the Crusades*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1951–54) vol. 3, p. 215 n. 2.
3. The lower levels of the tower dated back to Herodian times.
4. Louis IX, the fourth Capetian king of that name.
5. Henry III.
6. Henry of Dreux, archbishop 1227–40.

1. But see below, p. 120.
2. Probably Gerold; his successor Robert, bishop of Nantes, was not consecrated till 1240.
3. Peter of Sergines, 1235–44.
4. Ralph of Tournai, c. 1232–45.
5. Walter, count of Brienne, 1205–c. 1247, was probably not the count of Jaffa; married to Maria, the sister of Henry I, king of Cyprus, he held Jaffa on behalf of her mother, Alice of Champagne, whose dower it was; on her death Jaffa passed to her heir, Henry I; see Peter W. Edbury, *John of Ibelin and the Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Woodbridge, 1997), chapter 3.
6. Conrad of Thuringia, grand master of the Teutonic Knights 1239–40.

7. 1 November.

1. Al-Salih Isma'il.

1. In 1239 St Martin's day, 11 November, fell on a Friday, so that this encounter seems to be dated to the 18th, a week after the disaster at Gaza. But as it is known to have occurred before, not after, the Gaza defeat, perhaps the text should read 'the Friday before Martinmas'.
2. The tower of Babel, Genesis 11:4.
3. A tributary of the Euphrates, now al-Chabar.
4. 'By the waters of Babylon', Psalm 137:1.
5. 2 Kings 24, 25.
6. Isaiah 13:21.
7. Al-'Adil Abu Bakr II, 1238–40.

1. Rukn al-Din al-Hijawi, died 1249. For details of this encounter, see Christopher Marshall, *Warfare in the Latin East, 1192–1291* (Cambridge, 1992). For Rukn al-Din's death, see below, chapter 59.
2. In 1239 the Saturday after Martinmas fell on 12 November.

1. Died 1250.
2. Armand of Périgord.
3. Either Bertrand of Comps or his successor, Peter of Vieille-Bride.
4. Conrad of Thuringia.

1. This brook became part of a boundary in the treaties agreed by Theobald, count of Champagne, and Richard, earl of Cornwall.

1. 13 November 1239.

1. This literal translation represents nine- and ten-line stanzas of seven-syllable lines, mostly rhymed ABABCDCCDD.

1. William of Cordelle, the papal penitentiary who preached the cross in France and accompanied the crusade to the East. See C.T. Maier, *Preaching the Crusades: Mendicant Friars and the Cross in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 34.

1. Bohemond V.
2. Al-Salih Isma'il and al-Nasir Dawud.
3. Beaufort (Qal'at al-Shaqif) had been a possession of the lords of Sidon in the twelfth century but had been in Muslim hands since 1190.

1. Balian I Garnier.

1. In September 1240.

1. On 8 October 1240, leaving again 3 May 1241.
2. On the rebuilding of Ascalon at this period, see Denys Pringle, 'King Richard I and the Walls of Ascalon', *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 116 (1984), pp. 133–47 at pp. 143–6.

1. An illegitimate daughter, Constance or Anna, married John Ducas Vatatzes, emperor of Nicaea, in 1244.
2. An allusion to Frederick's imperial crown-wearing ceremony at the Holy Sepulchre in 1229. Frederick's son Conrad was the child of Isabella or Yolanda of Brienne, heiress of the kingdom of Jerusalem, who died in childbirth in 1228.

1. A bastard son, Enzo.
2. His prisoners included the cardinals, James of Palestrina and Otto of St Nicholas, and the legate, Gregory of Montelongo, captured in a naval battle, 3 May 1241.
3. 22 August 1241.
4. Goffredo da Castiglione, elected as Celestine IV on 25 October, died 10 November 1241.
5. Possibly an allusion to Daniel 9:26.

1. Sinibaldo Fieschi of Genoa, 25 June 1243–7 December 1254.
2. In July 1245.
3. Henry Raspe, landgrave of Thuringia, was elected in 1246, defeated Conrad in August the same year, but died in 1247.
4. Now Aachen in Germany.

1. William, count of Holland, elected 1247, died 1256.
2. Cardinal deacon of San Giorgio in Velabro.
3. Aix is low-lying, with hot springs; William took it on 21 October 1248.

1. These were the Mongols, the followers of Chingiz Khan and of his sons and grandsons.
2. These were a Turkic people who until 1219 had ruled a large kingdom in western Turkestan stretching from the Aral Sea to eastern Persia. Their power was destroyed by the Mongols under Chingiz Khan, and they were forced out of their traditional pasture-lands. They then sought new lands or employment as mercenaries in the Islamic lands further west. It was only in the early 1240s

that they moved southwards into Palestine.
3. Robert, bishop of Nantes, patriarch 1240–54.
4. Al-Salih Isma'il and al-Mansur Ibrahim.
1. Al-Nasir Dawud.
2. They may well have opened the royal tombs, searching for treasure, but the tombs themselves were still being shown to visitors until the fire of 1808. For what is known on this: Jaroslav Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098–1187* (Cambridge, 1995), see index, s.v. 'Holy Sepulchre, tombs'.
1. This battle took place near Gaza on 17 October 1244 and is known as the second battle of Gaza, the battle of La Forbie, or of Harbiya.
2. John of Ibelin, lord of Arsur, died 1258.
3. Philip was a half-brother of Balian, lord of Sidon, and a cousin of Amaury of Montfort and of Simon of Montfort, earl of Leicester (died 1265). He married the heiress of Toron and controlled Tyre from 1246 until his death.
4. William of Châteauneuf, master 1243–58.
5. This was in 1247.
1. For Bishop Galerand's mission to the West, see Bernard Hamilton, *The Latin Church in the Crusader States: The Secular Church* (London, 1980), p. 264.
2. On 17 October.
3. William of Auvergne, 1228–48.
1. In December 1244. Robert, count of Artois, (1216–49) was the second son of Louis VIII.
2. 28 August.
3. 17 September.
4. Charles (1226–85) was the seventh son of Louis VIII.
5. Beatrice of Provence.
6. Margaret of Provence.
7. 13 May 1249.
1. The son of Eudes Arrode of Paris (a household official of Philip Augustus), Nicholas died in 1252.
2. John Sarrasin died between 1270 and 1275; this letter is published as *Lettre à Nicolas Arrode*, ed. A. Foulet (Paris 1924).
3. 6 June 1249.
4. 28 August; 17 September.
5. The king's ship is named for the French warcry, *'Montjoie'*, which in its turn derives from the name of the hill outside Jerusalem, *Mons Gaudii*, the hill of joy, from which pilgrims had their first sight of the holy city.
6. The Mongol general in Iran.
7. They were Nestorian Christians; Andrew of Longjumeau, a Dominican, was returning from an embassy sent by the pope to the Mongols. It is now thought that the Mongols were not sincere in their offers but were trying to encourage the Christians to attack the Muslims so as to make a Mongol conquest easier. See David Morgan, *The Mongols* (Oxford, 1986) pp. 181–2.
1. Son of the Great Khan Ögedei.
2. Candlemas falls on 2 February.
3. For this embassy see Jean Richard, *Saint Louis, Crusader King of France*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1992), p. 283.
4. Louis reached Damietta in Egypt on 4 June. John Sarrasin's letter resumes at chapter 59.
1. Book 9 of the *Pharsalia* of Lucan.
2. Cato the Elder, 232–147 BC.
3. The following chapters, omitted from several manuscripts, derive ultimately from Lucan's *Pharsalia* and from the *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, but are inspired more closely by the thirteenth-century compilation known as *Li Fet des Romains*, ed. L.-F. Flutre and K. Sneyders de Vogel, 2 vols (Paris and Groningen, 1938).
1. The passages below derive from *Li Fet des Romains*, pp. 602–3; descriptions of some of the snakes are found in Lucan, also in the *Theriaca* of the third century B.C. poet, Nicander. See Nicander, *The Poems*, ed. and trans. A.S.F. Gow and A.F. Scholfield (Cambridge, 1953).
2. Probably the same word as *dipse*, which occurs below in chapter 49, in the Latin *dipsades*, from the Greek word for 'thirst'.
3. *Chelydrus*, a water snake; Lucan IX, 1. 7–11.
4. *Amphisbaena*;Lucan IX, 1.719.
5. *Chersydrus;* Lucan IX, 1.711.

1. *Haemorrois*, a blood-letting sidewinder; Lucan IX, 11.709, 806; Nicander, 11.282 ff.
2. *Hammodytes, a sand-coloured snake;* Lucan IX, 1.716.
3. *Scytale*, a cylindrical snake, i.e. of equal diameter throughout its length; Lucan IX, 1.17.
4. *Pareas*, a reddish-brown snake sacred to Asclepius; Lucan IX, 1. 721.
5. *Prester*, a snake whose bite causes a burning thirst; Lucan IX, 11. 722, 791.
6. See *Li Fet des Romains*, pp. 604–5 and Lucan IX, 11.734–60.
7. See above under *edype* in chapter 48.

1. See *Li Fet des Romains*, pp. 605–6 and Lucan IX, 11.76–88.
2. *Seps*; a snake whose bite causes putrefaction and/or extreme thirst, perhaps the south European viper; Lucan IX, 1.764.

1. See *Li Fet des Romains*, p. 606 and Lucan IX, 11.789–804.
2. See above, chapter 48.
3. See *Li Fet des Romains*, p. 607 and Lucan IX, 11. 805–14.
4. See above under *emorroiz*, chapter 48.
5. See *Li Fet des Romains*, pp. 607–8 and Lucan IX, 11. 822–7.

1. See *Li Fet des Romains*, p. 608 and Lucan IX, 11. 828–47.
2. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum*, ed. W.M. Lindsay, 2 vols (Oxford, 1911) XII, 6–7.
3. See *Li Fet des Romains*, pp. 609–10.

1. See *Li Fet des Romains*, p. 611 and Lucan IX, 11. 890–938.

1. This protective fumigation is mentioned by Nicander, 11.35 ff. and in Lucan IX, 11.915 ff.
2. Shirkuh, uncle of Saladin, was lost in a sand-storm while on campaign in 1167; see William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, trans. E.A. Babcock and A.C. Krey, 2 vols (New York, 1943), vol. 2, pp. 317–18.
3. See *Li Fet des Romains*, pp. 628 ff. and Lucan X, 11.173–331.

1. *Qui a non hernu*, but *Li Fet des Romains* reads *qui amene hernu*, 'which brings July' (p. 630).

1. The west wind.
2. 'Sesostris' a name used by Herodotus and later writers, usually identified with the nineteenth dynasty ruler, Rameses II.
3. King of Persia, 529–22 BC.

1. *Quintilis*, fifth.
2. Lucan X, 1. 292; *Sere*s, inhabitants of China.
3. In Ethiopia; the terms 'Ethiopia' and 'India' were differently understood at this period; see C.F. Beckingham, 'The Quest for Prester John' (1980) pp. 291–310 *in Between Islam and Christendom* (London, 1983 and Aldershot, 1996).
4. This comes from *Li Fet des Romains*, chapter IV; it was a well known story, based on a Jewish original and occurs in several forms, both as *Alexandri Magni iter ad Paradisum* and in Old French versions; *Li Fet*, vol. 1, pp. 397 ff. and notes vol. 2, pp. 161–2.
5. 356–23 BC.

1. Genesis 2:13.
2. Flutre and Sneyders de Vogel see here a reference to Christ.

1. Perhaps Enoch and Elijah; 'another king', below, perhaps the Antichrist.

1. And to the letter from John Sarrasin.
2. Saturday, 5 June 1249.
3. A Picard noble and royal chamberlain, remembered as an adversary of Jean, sire de Joinville (*Histoire de Saint Louis*, ed. Natalis de Wailly (Paris, 1921), chapters 33, 37, 83).
4. A knight of Louis' household, Geoffrey remained in the East in 1254 to command the contingent Louis established in Acre; see below, chapter 75. He became seneschal of the kingdom of Jerusalem and from 1261–63 held the office of regent; he died in 1269.

1. The oriflamme, banner of the kings of France, kept in the abbey of St Denis near Paris.
2. Joinville, *Histoire*, chapter 155: as his boat overtook the king's ship, he heard shouts ordering him to follow the banner displayed on the leading vessel, *mais je ne les en cru pas*, he did not trust them, but headed straight for the shore and 6000 mounted Turks.
3. 6 June.

1. The ninth hour of the day, about midday.
2. 12 June.
3. 1 November.

1. Al-Salih Ayyub, now very ill with either gangrene or more probably tuberculosis, returned in haste from besieging Horns; he put his elderly vizier Fakhr al-Din in command of the army opposing the French invasion.

2. On 23 June.
1. Giles of Saumur, archbishop of Tyre 1253–66, died 1266.
2. Probably Dominicans, called 'of St James' from the name of their house in Paris.
3. A religious order formed to buy back prisoners of war.
4. Matilda, daughter of Henry II, duke of Brabant.
5. Jeanne of Toulouse.
1. Son of Guy of Nanteuil who was lord of Antrèche and castellan of Bar.
2. Lord of Montpensier and Aigueperse, Constable of France (1240–50); died in Egypt.
3. Joinville says that Walter was thrown from his horse before reaching the enemy, and the horse, a stallion, galloped on to join the mares on which the Turks were mounted. Joinville and a friend went to visit the injured man, entered his tent quietly but found him dead. The king remarked that he would not wish to have a thousand such men, for they would all disobey him. *Histoire*, chapter 37.
4. 18 October.
5. Alphonse (1220–70), fifth son of Louis VIII, married Jeanne, heiress of Toulouse. He was regent of France after death of Queen Blanche.
6. 22 November.
1. 21 December.
2. On 7 December.
1. 20 January.
2. Al-Salih Ayyub, see above, chapter 60.
3. His son, al-Muʿazzam Turan-Shah, was far away in the Jazira.
4. The text has *alechorem*.
5. The vizier, Fahkr al-Din.
1. Movable protective screens.
2. An inflammable mixture of naptha and other substances.
1. 20 January.
2. Candlemas is 2 February.
3. 8 February 1250.
1. Fahkral-Din.
2. *Ades i aura dou peul du leu*; perhaps the phrase derives from Aesop's fable of the wolf in sheep's clothing.
3. Syrian-born Franks, as opposed to crusaders from the West.
1. A cousin of Count Walter of Brienne and through Walter connected by marriage with Henry I, king of Cyprus.
2. 1226–50.
3. Joinville, *Histoire*, chapter 45, records the deaths of the count of Artois, the lord of Coucy, and an estimated three hundred knights; the master of the Temple later told him that they had lost fourteen score mounted men-at-arms.
1. 9 February.
2. Turan-Shah reached Mansourah on 23 or 25 February 1250; Ibn al-Furat, *Ayyubids, Mamelukes and Crusaders*, ed. and trans. U. and M.C. Lyons and J.S.C. Riley-Smith, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1971), vol. 2, pp. 25–6.
1. 24–27 March 1250.
2. Alphonse and Charles, counts of Poitiers and Anjou.
1. The retreat began on 5 April.
1. William of Dampierre, died 1251.
2. Peter Mauclerc, died 1250.
3. John II of Nesle, 1237–70.
1. Robert (1240–54), see *Eracles*, book 33, chapter 56.
2. Hugh of Roche-Corbon, abbot of Cluny, elected bishop of Langres in 1244.
3. Guy, son of Ralph, count of Château-Porcien.
1. 18 February 1229.
1. 5 May 1250.
2. Beatrice, countess of Provence.
3. Robert's widow, Matilda of Brabant; she later married Guy of Châtillon.
4. Jeanne of Toulouse.
5. Hugh, see above, chapter 20.
1. Joinville gives a different picture, saying that almost all the nobles wanted Louis to go back to France to fetch men and money. Joinville himself disagreed: attacked as a *poulain* for wanting to stay in

Syria, he said he would rather be a *poulain* than a worn-out hack like themselves; *Histoire*, chapters 82–84.
2. The royal seal was lost with everything else in the defeat; see above, chapter 66.
3. Joel of Mayenne, 1244–50.
4. Nomadic Turks probably displaced by the Mongol advance.

1. Andrew of Longjumeau and his companions, sent to the Mongols while Louis was in Cyprus before the Egyptian campaign.
2. John III Vatatzes, Byzantine emperor of Nicaea, 1222–54.
3. Henry I of Cyprus married Plaisance, daughter of Bohemond V of Antioch, as his third wife in September 1250.
4. Al-Nasir Yusuf.
5. After Turan-Shah's murder, al-Salih Ayyub's widow, Shajar al-Durr, was vested with authority, but three months later she abdicated in favour of al-Mu'izz Aybeg. See Robert Irwin's clarification of Egyptian power-struggles at this time in his *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate, 1250–1382* (London and Sydney, 1986), pp. 26–9.

1. William of Châteauneuf.
2. Aybeg.
3. Candlemas is 2 February, but Muslim sources give the date of the battle as equivalent to 3 February 1251. It was fought at al-'Abbasa in the approaches to the Delta.

1. *Et les testes randues;* this must refer to a clause in the final treaty between Louis and the rulers of Egypt by which the heads of crusaders killed at Gaza and hung on the walls of Cairo castle were returned for burial. See Joinville, *Histoire*, c.518.
2. Aybeg.
3. Al-Nasir Yusuf.

1. That is, Hebron.
2. Louis remained at Jaffa from May 1252 to June 1253.
3. John of Damietta, count of Valois (1250–70), and Blanche, born 1252, who married Ferdinand, Infante of Castile.

1. Louis left the East on 25 April 1254, landed in France on 7 July and made his ceremonial entry into Paris on 7 September.
2. 1252–62.
3. 1253–70.
4. John II de Nesle. This passage, naming an abbot and the bishop and count of Soissons, would seem to indicate the chronicler's interest in this part of France.
5. Al-Nasir Yusuf.
6. The truce dates from February 1255. Geoffrey of Sergines' raid, below, took place at Christmas of the same year and the battle outside Jaffa described in chapter 77 in March 1256.

1. At Latrun, which had once belonged to the Templars.
2. John of Ibelin.

1. An epithet meaning 'cub, colt, youngster' applied, perhaps perjoratively, to Syrian-born Franks; see above p. 108, n. 1 for Joinville's use of the word, and M.R. Morgan, *The Chronicle of Ernoul and the Continuations of William of Tyre* (Oxford, 1973), pp. 194–5.
2. The war of St Sabas began in June 1256 and was fought over a building belonging to the Orthodox monastery of St Sabas in Judaea. It stood on the Acre waterfront, so placed that its possession would enable the Venetians to block Genoese access to the harbour.
3. In February 1258 Bohemond VI of Antioch (1252–75) brought his sister Plaisance (d.1261), widow of Henry I of Cyprus, and her young son King Hugh II of Cyprus (1253–67), to Acre, where Hugh was accepted as titular regent for the absentee king of Jerusalem, Conrad V (Conradin) of Hohenstaufen (1254–68). This enabled the authorities in Acre to transfer their support, without losing face, from the Genoese to the Venetians, who were by now gaining the upper hand. The text is not correct in claiming that Hugh II was descended from Walter IV of Brienne (died c. 1247). The text may be corrupt, and should perhaps read: 'the prince said that he, Hugh, ought to be heir and king and lord of the land in preference to the sons of Count Walter of Brienne'. Walter's sons were in the same degree of relationship to the Hohenstaufen and probably of age, whereas Hugh, though a prince of royal blood, was a child. See Peter Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus and the Crusades 1191–1373* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 86, n. 53.
4. Isabella (Yolanda) daughter of John of Brienne, born c. 1211, married Frederick II in 1225, died in 1228 after giving birth to Conrad (died 1254); his son was Conradin (1254–68).
5. John of Ibelin (d. 1258), cousin of John of Ibelin, count of Jaffa (d. 1266).

1. The Cumans or Qipchaq tribe were a Turkish people settled on the steppes north and north east of the Black Sea; they were subjugated by Batu Khan in 1238 and later mostly absorbed into the Mongol kingdom of the Golden Horde.
2. Al-Musta'sim.
1. Now Kayseri in Turkey.
2. The Assassin stronghold of Alamut in Persia was taken by the Mongols in 1256.
3. The Mongols took Baghdad in 1258, Aleppo and Damascus in 1260; they did not occupy Antioch; but its prince had accepted Mongol overlordship since the mid-1240s, a status renewed in 1259. In 1260 the papal legate excommunicated Bohemond for accepting Mongol dominion.
4. Al-Muzaffar Kutuz, Mamluk sultan (1259–60), and al-Nasir Yusuf.
5. Rukn al-Din Baybars, Mamluk sultan 1260–77.
6. Anno of Sangerhausen, master 1257–74.
1. In the battle of 'Ayn Jalut, 3 September 1260.
2. Kutuz.
3. Baybars.

The *Eracles* or *Acre* continuation of William of Tyre

Eracles Book 33, chapters 44–62

Book 34, chapters 1–4

BOOK 33 CHAPTER 44 1239

A great crusade now left the kingdom of France to go to Syria.[1] Men left their own countries and travelled to Marseille and to Aigues-Mortes, where they went aboard ship and crossed to Acre. On this journey were: Theobald, king of Navarre, who was count of Champagne;[2] also Henry, count of Bar-le-Duc;[3] the duke of Burgundy;[4] Peter of Dreux, count of Brittany;[5] the count of Forez,[6] who was count of Nevers in right of his wife; as well as Amaury, count of Montfort;[7] John of Dreux, count of Mâcon;[8] and a number of other important men.

When the pilgrims reached Acre they lodged both in the town and outside on the sands. There they discussed matters, agreed without a dissenting voice that they should go and fortify Ascalon, and rode to Jaffa.

At Jaffa a scout reported to the Templars that there were 1050 Turks quartered at Gaza under the command of an emir known as Rukn al-Din.[9] When the Christians heard this, they decided to send 400 knights out on this mission. These included the count of Bar-le-Duc, the count of Montfort, Balian of Sidon,[10] Odo of Montbéliard,[11] John of Arsur[12] and the Templars and Hospitallers. They left Jaffa in the early evening and rode until they reached Gaza next day. Then they put on their armour and rode in battle array towards the Turks' encampment.[13]

CHAPTER 45 1239

When the Turks saw them advancing, they mounted their horses and took station on a hill. Rukn al-Din consulted his men, who advised him to retreat, as he had nothing like enough numbers to fight them. Rukn al-Din replied that he would withdraw in due course, but first he would send his heavy equipment away, and would go and try their strength. He did as he had said, sending 200 Turks to harass them. As soon as these approached and began shooting, the Christians began to mill about and jostle each other. Seeing this, the skirmishers attacked more fiercely and pressed their enemies harder. Rukn al-Din saw how disorganised the Christians were, and came down fast from his hillside to join the fight. Reaching it, both he and his men spurred to a gallop, charged into the confused crowd of Christians and did them much injury. Without any attempt to re-order their ranks, they fled pell-mell, each man for himself. Amaury, count of Montfort, was taken, the count of Bar-le-Duc killed,[1] and a great mass of knights were killed or captured, both laymen and religious. The foot-sergeants were all lost and so was most of the equipment.

Those who escaped from the battle went to Ascalon, where they found the king of Navarre and the count of Brittany with the main army. As soon as they got there, such panic struck every heart that they all thought the Saracens were

coming to capture every one of them. The moment it was dark, therefore, each man set off on his own for Jaffa, in complete disorder, not one of them waiting for another. Off they went like defeated men, abandoning large quantities of food and equipment. They reached Jaffa, paused briefly, set off again and did not stop till they got to Acre.

CHAPTER 46 1239

Having reached Acre, they settled down and stayed there a long time without doing anything. During this period a clerk from Tripoli called William went to the host and told the commanders that the sultan of Hama wanted them to know that if they would come to his land and bring him help and support from the Christians, he would put his castles under their control and would become a Christian.[2] He urged and begged them to do this and not to put any obstacle in his way. The commanders discussed this and agreed to co-operate.

Then the army left Acre and rode along the coast to Tripoli. Here they stopped, encamped on Mount Pilgrim outside the city, and from there sent their own envoys with the clerk, William, to the sultan of Hama, hoping to find out if he intended to go ahead with this plan. The sultan made a show of wanting an agreement and led them on with words for some time, but in the end he completely let them down, as if he had merely been playing with them. He put on this whole display because he was afraid of the lady of Aleppo, mother of the sultan, with whom he was at war. This lady was holding the lordship of Aleppo for her son, the sultan, because he was a child and very young.[3] At last the Christians realised that the sultan of Hama was lying and deceiving them, and after staying some time outside Tripoli, where Bohemond prince of Antioch[4] treated them with great distinction, they left and returned to Acre. But John, count of Mâcon, died at Tripoli and was buried in the church of the Hospital of St John.[5]

CHAPTER 47 1240

Once back at Acre, the army soon removed to the Cayphas palm groves in order to graze their horses. When the grass there was finished, they went and encamped near the Springs of Saffuriya.[1] An envoy from the sultan of Damascus went to them while they were there in order to discuss the truce. This sultan was al-Salih,[2] son of al-'Adil Sayf al-Din,[3] and he had been and still was lord of Baalbek. He became sultan of Damascus in this way: when al-Ashraf[4] died, al-Kamil[5] held Damascus, as you heard earlier. Then after al-Kamil died the town was without a lord, as his eldest son was away in his own lordship in the land of the Levant. His name was al-Salih,[6] like his uncle whom you have heard mentioned. Another son, al-'Adil,[7] was in Egypt, of which he was lord. For these reasons a nephew of Saladin called al-Malik al-Jawad[8] came forward and went to Damascus, where he was accepted as lord

and made sultan. He held the land for a long time, until al-Salih who was in the Levant moved from there with a strong army and went to Damascus. Al-Jawad went to meet him, surrendered Damascus to him and remained with him, for he knew that the men of Damascus would never support him against al-Salih.

Al-Salih prepared his army to go to Egypt and take that land from his brother. But he halted at Nablus, realising that he had not enough men for the task, sent some of his troops back to Damascus and stayed at Nablus with only a very few. The son of *Coraidin*, known as al-Nasir, was at Kerak.[9] He learned that al-Salih was at Nablus almost alone, and so promptly left Kerak for Nablus, captured al-Salih and took him back to Kerak. Here he had him loaded with chains and kept a prisoner. Al-Salih of Baalbek heard this news, went to Damascus and was welcomed there and made sultan.[10]

CHAPTER 48 1240

The Christians were now at Saffuriya and this al-Salih of whom you have heard[1] had sent his envoy to them. Matters went ahead and a truce was made between him and the Christians by which he returned Beaufort castle to them and agreed to give them back all the land held by the Franks between the coast and the River Jordan.[2] They promised him not to make any truce or settlement with the sultan of Babylon[3] unless he agreed and was party to it; also to assist him against that sultan, and to go and encamp at Ascalon or Jaffa with their whole force so as to prevent the sultan of Babylon crossing the desert and entering Syrian territory; and he[4] was to encamp near them at the place where the Jaffa River[5] runs out. The whole of this agreement which you have heard was sworn to by all the commanders of the host and by the sultan and his emirs. He began by giving them back Beaufort and the lands of Sidon and Tiberias.

This sultan of Babylon, against whom the sultan of Damascus had made agreements with the Christians, was the nephew of the al-Salih whom, as you heard, al-Nasir took and held in prison in Kerak.[6] He hoped that by capturing him he would get possession of Damascus, but when he learned that their uncle al-Salih held Damascus and his hope came to nothing, he had to think again. He told his cousin al-Salih, whom he had in prison, that if he would marry his sister and promise him to bring troops to help him get Damascus, which had belonged to his father, and when he had got it, would let him hold it in good peace. If, he said, he was willing to do this for him, he was prepared to do all he could to put his brother al-'Adil into his hands, and would make him sultan of Babylon. He already had some support for this plan from the emirs of Babylon, to whom he had given and promised great wealth, for his father had left him a richly filled treasury.

CHAPTER 49 1240

When al-Salih had given him the guarantees he wanted, had married his sister and been released, al-Nasir sent privately to Babylon and made sure of the agreements the emirs had promised him on oath. Then he set out with his whole strength, which included 700 mounted Turks and 500 or more Turks who had rejoined al-Salih once they knew he was free. They crossed the desert, travelling secretly and as fast as they could, until they reached the Cairo. There they found that the emirs had taken their lord al-'Adil prisoner.[1] They handed him over to his brother al-Salih, who put him in prison – or into some other place. He was never seen again. Thus al-Salih became sultan of Egypt. This was the man whom the other al-Salih, sultan of Damascus, feared, so that he turned to the Christians when the truce was sworn, as you heard earlier.

The Christians went to encamp at Jaffa; al-Salih of Damascus and the lord of Horns[2] settled with all their forces at the mouth of the river.

This truce that you have heard about was sought and made at the instigation of the Temple but without the Hospital's support, so that the Hospital got the sultan of Babylon to make a different truce with some of the Christians. This truce was sworn to by the king of Navarre, the count of Brittany and many other pilgrims, none of whom gave a moment's thought to the promise they had made to the sultan of Damascus. Once this truce was settled as you have heard, the king of Navarre, the count of Brittany and the other pilgrims who had sworn the Babylon truce, left Jaffa and went to Acre, hired ships and went home to their own countries.[3] The master of the Hospital, Brother Peter of Vieille-Bride,[4] who had sworn to this truce but had made no promise to the sultan of Damascus, left Jaffa with his whole brotherhood and went to Acre, where he settled among the men of that land. The Templars, however, and the count of Nevers and one section of the pilgrims remained at Jaffa, refusing either to go away or to withdraw from their agreement with the sultan of Damascus. Thus the Christians' affairs were full of discord and dissension, as one party adhered to one truce and the others to the other.

CHAPTER 50 1240

While the pilgrims were at Acre, Alice,[5] mother of the king of Cyprus,[6] married one of the great men of France, Ralph of Soissons, brother of the count of Soissons. Having married her, he then came forward, supported by one party among the people of the country, and demanded on his wife's behalf that she be given the guardianship of the kingdom of Jerusalem. He did this on the grounds that she was the nearest heir to be found in the country among the heirs of King Amaury her grandfather, or who had existed since the death of her niece, the empress Isabella.[1] The people of the kingdom discussed the matter and replied that Queen Isabella, the emperor's wife, had had a son, who was in Apulia and was the true heir to the kingdom. But as he was not present, nor ever had been, they would accept her as lady and would grant her the kingdom in ward and would be bound to her, saving all the rights of King

Conrad, son of the empress Isabella, her niece, and so it was done.

When Ralph of Soissons had obtained the lordship in the way you have heard, he held it feebly enough, for those who had put him there, that is his wife's relations, had more authority and power than he had, so that he seemed to be nothing but a shadow. Angry and disappointed, he threw it all up, left his wife and went home to his own country.[2]

CHAPTER 51 1240

As the king of Navarre and the count of Brittany left for home on the voyage of the holy Cross, Richard, king of Cornwall[3] and brother of King Henry of England, arrived in Acre, bringing with him a fine company of knights and also great wealth.[4] He stayed at the house of St John's Hospital in Acre. When he had spent some time in Acre and had equipped and prepared himself and his men, he moved on to Jaffa, where he lodged with the other Christians there. While he was at Jaffa the Templars urged him to become a party to the truce and agreements made with the sultan of Damascus, and pressed him to swear to it. The Hospitallers sent messages to him – and indeed many in Acre itself spoke to him about this – begging him to adhere to the truce made with the sultan of Babylon. He refused to do either, but said that if the Christians in Jaffa would go and encamp at Ascalon, he was prepared to fortify the castle. The commanders of the host discussed this with the Templars and the German Hospitallers. They saw that his proposal did not conflict with their agreement with the sultan of Damascus[5] and that it would benefit Christendom, and so they agreed to it, found labourers and everything else needed for the work, and left Jaffa to go to Ascalon. Having arrived there, they settled down and began their task. They fortified the castle in the same way that King Richard of England, uncle of this Earl Richard now repairing it, had done.[6]

When he had fortified it, he equipped it as well as he could and then sent word to Jerusalem to a knight called Walter Pennenpie, who was deputy governor of the city for the emperor and held it by agreement and truce with the sultan of Babylon. As soon as Walter reached Ascalon, Earl Richard delivered the castle to him, to beheld for the emperor. That done, he returned to Acre, hired a ship and went back to his own country.[1]

The army returned to Jaffa And wherever the Christian army went, the sultan of Damascus and his forces always encamped close by. After staying a long time at Jaffa, the pilgrims who had remained behind the others wanted to go home, so they went to Acre, hired vessels, and went back to their own lands. All the other Christians then returned to Acre.

CHAPTER 52 1242

At this point Riccardo Filangieri, the emperor's marshal, who was at Tyre, took ship for Apulia to go to the emperor, who had sent for him. He left his brother

Lotario in his place and made over the city and castle of Tyre to him.

With Riccardo gone, Balian of Ibelin, lord of Beirut, and Philip of Montfort, lord of Toron,[2] having managed to win supporters inside Tyre, left Acre at nightfall and rode to Tyre. As soon as they approached the walls, their supporters inside the city, who were all stationed in arms near the Butchery Gate, made signals to them; then they struck in their spurs and took to the sea, rode all round the city wall by the Hospital of the Germans and entered the town through the postern where their friends were waiting. Then they rode hard for the castle.

Lotario Filangieri heard all this happening, armed himself, left his lodgings and went to the castle. All the Apulians in the town, those that could get there, entered the castle too. That is how the city of Tyre was taken from the emperor's men.

CHAPTER 53 1240–45

When Ralph of Soissons, who knew nothing about this venture, heard that Balian of Ibelin and Philip of Montfort had taken Tyre and were holding it, he and his wife Alice left Acre and went to Tyre. Having arrived there, Ralph demanded the city of Tyre for himself and his wife from Balian and Philip; they wished to hold it in the same way as they held everything else in the kingdom. These said they would not yield or deliver the city to them but would keep it until they knew who was the right person to receive it. This was one of the reasons why Ralph of Soissons went away, as you heard.

At this time Pope Innocent IV[1] realised that he could not summon a council to Rome or to any place in that region, and so he sent word to Genoa, asking for galleys to be sent secretly to the mouth of the Tiber. When they arrived, he left Rome privately, reached the place, embarked on the galleys and went to Genoa. He travelled like this so that the emperor Frederick should not stop him. He stayed a while at Genoa, then left, crossed the mountains and went to Lyon on the Rhone. Here he stayed, summoned his prelates and assembled all those he could get.[2] Then he sent to the emperor, admonishing him on thirteen heads under which he was accused and ordering him to place himself in the mercy of the Church. He had previously informed him of these accusations, and as he had never come forward to make any answer, he, the pope, had had enquiry made and found that the allegations were true; Frederick was a proven and convicted offender. As such he should put himself in the mercy of Holy Church.

When the emperor heard the pope's orders, he sent envoys to Lyon. These were the marquis of Frohburg and Master Piero della Vigna,[3] one of the emperor's lawyers and an excellent advocate.

These went to the pope, and, once admitted to his presence, Master Piero addressed him:

'My lord, the emperor my lord commends himself to you at your feet as to

his lord and father, and he informs you that he would have come in person to your feet to hear your commands and obey you in everything if he could, but his body prevents this, as he is ill in bed and unable to move. Therefore he asks you to grant him some delay so that he can come and obey your commands. And if you are pleased to release him from your demands and will establish him and leave him in peace as a Catholic Christian who believes in Jesus Christ, he is prepared within one year from now to put Jerusalem and the whole land which used to belong to the Latins into the hands and control of Christians. ‘

The pope asked him if he could show any authorisation to prove that he really was the emperor’s envoy and that the words he had spoken came from him. He said yes, he could. Then he held out a letter sealed in gold and another from a notary public, saying that he was trustworthy and should be regarded as an envoy. Then the pope asked him if his lord the emperor had in fact the power to do all he claimed in Syria. The man said yes, and affirmed it strongly. Then the pope turned to the prelates and cardinals and said loudly so that everyone heard him,

‘My lords, now you see what sort of Christian the emperor is! He has the power to take the Holy Land and the Holy Places of Jerusalem and give them back to Christians, he can release them from the hands and the power of unbelievers, but he will not do it and refuses to do it, except through agreement!’ Then he told the emperor’s envoys that they should excuse him, what they had said was not sufficient and he did not accept it because they had not proved or offered to prove their message; he would be acting out of order; let them not approach him again.

CHAPTER 54 1245

Next the pope called a general council and laid this matter of the emperor before it, with the result that the emperor was condemned and deposed, both himself and his heirs.[1] The pope made this widely known and excommunicated all who in future should consider or refer to him as emperor. After that the pope sent a legate into Germany to preach against the emperor, so that many people turned against him and supported the pope, especially all the clergy, who are very powerful in the land. When the pope knew that he had won most of the power in Germany over to his side, he sent word and succeeded in getting a king chosen there and crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle.[2] The man they made king was William, count of Holland,[3] and the pope promised him that as soon as he was in Rome and had the freedom to do so, he would crown him emperor.

Then a great and bitter war was fought between those who supported the emperor Frederick and those who held by William, the new king. Very hard did the pope work to support this warfare, sending to it all the men and money he could, and offering indulgences for it as great as those for the land beyond

the sea. This war and conflict continued until the emperor's death.[4] When the emperor died, the pope returned to Rome. The men of the kingdom sent for King Conrad,[5] the emperor's son, who was in Germany, of which his father had made him king, and they continued to fight against the Church and against King William.

CHAPTER 55 1242

Now we will go back to the matter of Syria. You heard how Riccardo Filangieri, the emperor's marshal, left Tyre. With him were his brother Enrico and their wives, as well as considerable wealth. They set off aboard ship to go to Apulia. After nine days at sea, storms and ill fortune struck them and kept them long at sea and in great distress. At last the weather carried them towards Tripoli on the Barbary coast. Here they found that their boat was falling to pieces and water was coming in everywhere. Looking around, they saw a Saracen supply vessel making for Alexandria out of Tunis. They came up alongside her, went aboard with all their belongings and left their own ship to the Saracens. While they were heading, they supposed, for the island of Sicily, violent weather blew up and drove them back for several days, until in the end they fetched up again at Tyre, from which they had sailed. They entered harbour, anchored, and disembarked into what they thought was their own town, for they had no idea what had been happening since they left. The townsmen saw them coming ashore, went down to the harbour, laid hands on the marshal, his brother and their wives and all their possessions, and took them to Balian, lord of Beirut.

Balian had them taken to the castle entrance, where he had a gallows set up and told Lotario to surrender the castle, and then he would release his brothers. If he did not surrender it, he would have them hanged before his eyes. Lotario considered, saw that he could not hold the castle and surrendered it to Balian, setting his brothers free.

CHAPTER 56 1244

At this time al-Salih, sultan of Babylon, sent great wealth to the eastern lands of which he was lord, in order to bring troops to his assistance. He also told them that he would give them land in Egypt if they wanted to come and live there, with the result that a populous nation from a city called Khwarazm – hence their name, Khwarazmians[1] – 20,000 mounted men at least, rode to join him. They did so for fear of the Tartars, who had entered their countries. These Khwarazmians rode on until they reached Gaza, where they found the army of the sultan of Egypt. On their way they caused terrible damage in the land of Tripoli and elsewhere. So suddenly did they appear at Jerusalem that very few could escape; more than 30,000 were killed, men, women and children, in this surprise attack, for these people took no prisoners, all they wanted to do was

kill.

The sultan of Damascus, Malik al-Salih, sent his host to Acre, 4000 mounted men commanded by the sultan of Horns. When they got there, the Christians who were present – the Hospitallers of St John, the Templars, the Hospitallers of the Germans, the lay knights of the country and the others who had gone there from Cyprus and Tripoli – set out from Acre together with the Turks. Robert, patriarch of Jerusalem, and several other prelates accompanied them, and they all rode on to Ascalon. Count Walter of Brienne joined them from Jaffa and so did 600 Christian knights, not counting other mounted men and sergeants on foot. Having reached Ascalon, they discussed their next move. In the course of the discussion the sultan of Horns said:

'My lords, you are dealing with a large nation of foreigners who have no base here. This will make them desperate, and so I strongly advise against battle. We should stay here, as we have plenty of food and will get more from Acre; they have very little food and are numerous, they cannot possibly stay long but will have to move on. All we need is for them to go away, and as they are foreigners without a base they will not be able to stand firm, they will destroy themselves and will have to go. If they go into the land of Babylon, where I do not in the least suppose the sultan will admit them, we shall be rid of them for the present.'

CHAPTER 57 1244

Many of the Christians agreed with the sultan but others insisted that they should go and attack them where they were. Through hatred and envy amongst the Christians, through sin and misfortune, the worse plan prevailed, and so they set out from Ascalon at dawn on a Tuesday morning and rode to Gaza. There they found the host of Babylon, who were 3000 Turks, and the 20,000 Khwarazmians. The squadrons encountered and a fierce conflict began. It was brief, however, as the sultan of Horns and his Turks soon rode off the field and fled; they lost all their equipment. The Christians began milling about, the squires and foot-sergeants pushed in amongst the ranks and the knights could not spur forward to get at the Turks. Then they began to quit, and one section turned the battle into a rout. Envy, pride and folly brought the Christians to this.

In this battle[1] were taken: William of Châteauneuf, master of St John's Hospital;[2] Armand of Périgord, master of the Temple, who died in prison;[3] Walter, count of Brienne who also died in prison;[4] Thomas of Ham, constable of Tripoli; and John and William, sons of Bohemond, lord of Botron. Many other knights, lay and religious, were killed or captured, and so were countless others. Hardly a quarter of the whole host escaped, and the dead included Peter of Sergines, archbishop of Tyre, and the bishop of St George of Ramla.[5] Those who survived this defeat went to Ascalon but only paused there briefly before moving on to Acre.

The Turks from Babylon rode away from Gaza with all their plunder and went back to their own land. They left the Khwarazmians, who hoped that the sultan would send for them, but he was afraid of the harm they could do him, being so numerous. Not wanting to bring them anywhere near him, he stationed men at Bilbeis to oppose them and prevent them crossing the desert.[6] When the Khwarazmians heard this, they felt they had been thoroughly tricked and cheated. Then they went away across the country looking for some means of living, doing much damage in many places and under frequent attack from various peoples. They kept to open country as they had no base, no city or castle. This meant that the people living there, who were all hostile to them, could often take them by surprise and reduce their numbers. Thus it went on for some three years, by which time they had been so harassed there was not one of them left in that country. This defeat took place on a Tuesday in the year of the Incarnation of Our Lord 1244 in the month of October, on the feast day of my lord St Luke the Evangelist.[1]

CHAPTER 58 1244

At this period Pope Innocent IV was at Lyon on the Rhône, as you heard earlier. In France King Louis was taken very ill, so much so that he lost all power of speech and was thought to have died.[2] His mother Queen Blanche, his wife and his brothers broke out into lamentations, thinking him dead, and they sent for clergy to conduct his funeral service. Then at that moment he breathed, opened his eyes, looked round him and said,

'Fetch the bishop of Paris.' In joy and happiness, all their grief changed to delight, those who were with him sent for the bishop.[3] When the king saw him, he said,

'My lord bishop, give me the cross for the Holy Land beyond the sea.' When the queen mother, his brothers and the queen his wife heard that, they knelt to him and said,

'My lord, in God's mercy, wait till you are better! Then you can do what you like.' This made him angry and he said,

'You can be sure I shall neither eat nor drink until I have the cross for Outremer on my shoulder.' Then he called the bishop of Paris back to him and asked him again for the cross. The bishop did not dare refuse, so he took a piece of silk ribbon, folded it into a cross, knelt down weeping in front of the king and offered it him. The king took it, kissed it, held it to his eyes and then had it fastened to his shoulder.

'Now I am cured,' he said. You may be sure that the weeping and lamentations inside and outside his bedroom were as great as when they thought he was dead.

When the king was up and better, he had letters written and sent to inform them in Syria that he had taken the cross; let them take comfort, defend and equip their cities and castles, for with God's help he would soon be in the Holy

Land.

CHAPTER 59 1245–48

It now happened that al-Salih, sultan of Damascus, went to Baalbek, which had been his oldest possession. A dispute arose between him and the sultan of Aleppo; this ended in a battle in which the sultan of Damascus was defeated, captured and imprisoned in Aleppo.[1] When the sultan of Babylon heard that his uncle al-Salih was in prison in Aleppo, he set out with his whole great host, went to Damascus, set siege to it and made a pretence of cutting down the gardens. The townspeople were afraid he would do this, and saw that they had no lord whatever to protect them – they are a soft race and bad people, merchants and tradesmen every one of them, and only a very few warriors. For this reason they welcome anyone who arrives with some slight strength, and so they surrendered to him.

After taking Damascus, he went to Horns and to Baalbek and took them both. Then very soon he sent his forces to besiege a castle at Tiberias which Odo of Montbéliard had fortified. They attacked in great strength, took it by storm, killed or captured all inside it, then went on to besiege Ascalon.[2] Here they mounted a strong siege and attacked vigorously, using engines, mining, and direct assaults upon the ramparts. And in order to reduce the castle and prevent men and supplies being brought in by sea, the sultan sent to Alexandria and Damietta for 22 galleys, as well as a supply vessel carrying victuals and gear for the galleys. These kept station off Ascalon so that no boats could get in.

CHAPTER 60 1246–47

When the Hospitallers, defending Ascalon for the emperor,[3] saw this, they requested assistance from everyone in Acre, prelates, religious, communes and others: let them help to provide armed vessels so as to drive the galleys off and allow supplies and reinforcements to come in. They sent to Cyprus for this purpose and asked King Henry for help. He sent eight galleys, well armed and well manned by knights and sergeants, under the command of Baldwin of Ibelin, seneschal of Cyprus.[4] As soon as they were ready they left Famagusta and made for Acre, where they joined the other boats being prepared. From there they moved on all together. There were fifteen galleys and other vessels: galliots, galleasses and *ganguemeles*, at least fifty all told. Under sail and oars they all reached Ascalon.

When the Saracens saw them, they brought their galleys and supply ship as close inshore as they could, to protect them from attack. The Christians' ships lay opposite them, anchored out at sea, and there they remained five days. Then one evening a strong wind blew from the west, putting the Christian fleet into some danger. The vessels, however, rode safely at anchor, and the more so

because they were a good distance offshore. Along this coast the sea is more turbulent and dangerous inshore than it is further out. Thus the Turkish galleys could not weather the storm but drove ashore and all twenty-two galleys and the supply ship were wrecked. In the morning the Christians saw the Saracen vessels lying smashed along the shoreline and were able to bring in fresh supplies. But the wind and sea were so violent they could not endure it any longer, but raised anchor, loosed their sails and returned to Acre.

CHAPTER 61 1246–47

When the Turks saw what had happened, they attacked the castle more vigorously than ever, and what was expected to help the place in fact harmed it. When the galleys were shattered, the Saracens used the timbers and planks to make cats, mantles and covered ways, they converted masts into engines to fling missiles into the castle, and so they pressed harder and harder until the castle could hold out no longer. Yet its defenders fought bravely; it is a long time since anyone has heard of men who endured as they did or showed such courage and resolve. This did not help them: the castle was stormed and taken, for they were exhausted by the incessant assaults which gave them no respite and no chance to rest. Besides this, the Turks dug a mine into the very hill on which the castle stood; the miners broke through right inside the castle and the Turks rushed in pell mell. Some saw this happening before the others did, ran down to the shore and aboard the boats. Most escaped in this way, but others who stayed behind were killed or captured. The castle was demolished. Thus all the castles fortified by the king of Navarre, the count of Brittany and Earl Richard of Cornwall were lost, all except Safed Castle, which the Templars had fortified.[1]

CHAPTER 62 1247

It happened now in Antioch that a people called Turcomans[2] rose in anger because of injuries done to them and began to make raids in the land of Antioch, sweeping across country, looting the villages and killing the peasants. These Turcomans are an undomesticated people who have no towns or castles but always live in tents made of felt and possess large flocks of animals, sheep and ewes, goats, and oxen and cows too. They live like shepherds and never raise any kind of crops. Of all Saracens, none are more despised when it comes to fighting, and this is why the people of Antioch held them in contempt. For this reason they now simply went out to hunt them down without any order or plan, they thought so little of them. But the fleeing Turcomans looked back, saw their pursuers scattered about here and there, and they rallied, turned back and attacked. They defeated their pursuers, killing some and capturing others. This happened frequently, to the alarm of the people of Antioch and the joy of the Turcomans.

Now we shall stop talking about Antioch and the Turcomans because we must continue with the subject of this book and set out in order the events that occurred in the land of Syria.

BOOK 34 CHAPTER 1 1248–50

Louis, king of France, who had taken the cross as you heard earlier, made preparations to cross to Syria. One year before he himself left, he sent some of his people to the island of Cyprus. He did this so that they could collect supplies of food and other necessities; they brought fifty valuable horses, and were commanded by a valiant sergeant called Nicholas of Soisi.[1] The year after they reached Cyprus, the king left France to go to Aigues-Mortes. This was in the year of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ 1248; he landed in Cyprus on 28 September. In Marseille Earl Patrick died.[2]

The lord of Arsur[3] gave up the post of regent and John Fuinon[4] became regent; Odo of Tusculum[5] was legate.

On 20 May 1249 the king left Limassol for Damietta, where he arrived on the fourth day of June. On the fifth day he forced a landing and on the sixth day the city of Damietta fell to him without a blow being struck.

In Acre there was fighting between the Pisans and the Genoese. It lasted twenty-eight days; they shot at each other with twenty-two different engines, stone-throwers, trebuchets and mangonels.

John Fuinon ceased to be regent and the lord of Arsur resumed that post. He made a three-year truce between the communes.

After the fighting, a storm destroyed 72 vessels, large and small, in Acre harbour, also 32 ships in Damietta harbour, 10 other vessels and many more on the river.

On 27 November the king and his host set out for Mansourah and reached it on 22 December. On their way the Templars and the count of Artois,[6] who formed the vanguard, encountered *Li Sac* and the Saracen vanguard at Sharimshah and killed about 155 of them. Next day a good thousand Saracens were killed, captured or drowned after fording the stream on foot to harass the Christians.

On 8 January the lord of Arsur and the kingdom's forces went to demolish *Bechsen*[7] and a Turcoman encampment, where they won 16,000 beasts, large and small, and captured the emir who commanded there.

On 8 February 1250 the king and his forces crossed the River Tanis, but many knights and other men were drowned. After that the king made a surprise attack on the Saracen camp and killed many of them. The army's vanguard forced its way into Mansourah and out of greed the common troops looted the town. The Saracens saw this and came back. They killed the count of Artois, the earl of Salisbury,[1] Count Ralph of Coucy[2] and many others.

On 5 April the king and his host, having no food left, set off to go to Damietta and were all captured on the Sharimshah road.

On 2 May the Saracens killed their sultan. Then the king and the lords swore a truce with the Saracen emirs and paid 100,000 marks of silver in ransom. The king, his brothers, the legate and the patriarch were released, and so were many nobles, knights, and other men. They reached Acre on 8 May.

Next the king fortified the town of Acre and on St Laurence's day[3] Count Alphonse of Poitiers,[4] Charles, count of Anjou[5] and William, count of Flanders[6] left to cross the sea.[7] Henry, king of Cyprus, married Plaisance, daughter of the prince of Antioch,[8] in September and the Saracens released Brother William, master of the Hospital,[9] 120 knights and about 800 others.

The emperor Frederick died on St Lucy's day.[10]

CHAPTER 2 1250–54

Conrad, king of Jerusalem, Frederick's son lived two years, five months and fifteen days.[11] He closely imitated his father's wickedness and he despised and hated the female sex. Unstable, a drunkard and spendthrift, he was a ravisher and persecutor of the Church. He is said to have had young Henry, the king of England's nephew, poisoned, and also his own nephew, Frederick, son of his brother, King Henry.[12] He killed certain Minorites and other religious in different painful ways. He had the walls of Naples and of Capua demolished.[13] He had himself named emperor by the people in defiance of all right and law, and this at a time when William, count of Holland, had been elected king and had the right to the empire. This Conrad was excommunicate by the authority of Pope Innocent IV until he died. In Egypt the sultan of Aleppo[1] and 30,000 mounted men were defeated; more than 2100 Egyptians died in the battle.[2]

Henry, king of England, took the cross and forbade the great men of his land to make this journey.[3]

In 1251 the king of France fortified Caesarea; Peter Larcat[4] was made archbishop of Tyre; Bohemond died;[5] his son Bohemond[6] became prince and count after him.

Then Alexander, son of the king of Scotland, married the king of England's daughter.[7] In 1252 King Louis fortified Jaffa, and his mother, the lady Blanche, died. King Louis knighted Bohemond, prince of Antioch, at Jaffa. Julian, lord of Sidon, married the daughter of Hethoum, king of Armenia.[8]

In 1253 Saracens from Damascus appeared outside Acre. They destroyed *Doc* and *Ricordane*,[9] took Sidon, killed 800 or more men and carried off 400 or more prisoners, masons and others. The king fortified Sidon once again.

Henry, king of Cyprus, died, and so did Guy of Mimars, bishop of Paphos, Walter, bishop of Acre, and Nicholas Larcat, archbishop of Tyre. After him Giles from Damietta was elected as archbishop.[10] Hethoum, king of Armenia, travelled to the Tartars.

In 1254 the rebuilding of the walls of Sidon was completed and the king went away to Acre. He knighted Balian of Ibelin,[11] the lord's son, who later married Plaisance, the queen of Cyprus.[12]

After St Mark's day[13] the king set out from Acre with the queen and their people to go across the sea He left one hundred knights with my lord Geoffrey of Sergines,[14] seneschal of the kingdom, to defend the kingdom of Syria.

Martha,[15] lady of Sidon, died on 5 June. Next day Peter of Beaune, marshal of the Hospital, died.

On 21 May King Conrad died. Then on 8 June Robert, patriarch of Jerusalem, died. The patriarch Epice[1] landed in Acre; John of Ibelin, count of Jaffa, was regent of the kingdom.[2]

The legate Odo bishop of Tusculum left Acre in mid-September to go across the sea.

Then Bohemond, prince of Antioch, married Sibylla, daughter of Hethoum, king of Armenia.[3]

Then in December Pope Innocent died,[4] and was succeeded by Alexander.[5]

CHAPTER 3 1255–1261

Alexander IV was made pope. He had been bishop of Ostia, and gave St Lazarus of Bethany with its dependencies to the Hospital of St John; also Mount Tabor.[6]

In 1255 a truce was made with the lord of Damascus.[7] It covered territory from the Arsur river to Beirut.

Cardinal Otho entered the kingdom of Apulia with Pope Alexander's forces. Foggia surrendered to him, as did St Laurence of Siponto, Monte Sant' Angelo and the whole coastline as far as Otranto.

In 1256 John of Ibelin ceased to be regent and was succeeded by John of Ibelin, lord of Arsur.

On 3 June, the eve of Pentecost, the patriarch of Jerusalem, Master James,[8] formerly bishop of Verdun, arrived in Acre. After St John's day,[9] Master Florent, consecrated bishop of Acre in Rome, reached Acre.[10]

Hugolino Bozacharia, consul of the Pisans at Acre, died. It was he who took prisoner the prelates on their way to the council in Rome.[11]

Fighting began between the Genoese and Venetians for possession of the house of St Sabas.[12] With help from the Pisans, the Genoese defeated the Venetians and took and ransacked their street right up to and in St Mark's.

Brother Reynald of Vichiers, master of the Temple, died. Brother Thomas Berard was made master after him.[13]

In 1257 the Genoese agreed and promised on oath to guard and keep the lordship for themselves, as the Venetians and Pisans were reconciled with each other and had sworn an agreement against the Genoese.

Next, Bohemond, prince of Antioch, arrived and brought his sister, Plaisance, queen of Cyprus, and his nephew Hugh, the queen's son, and heir of the kingdom of Cyprus and of Jerusalem;[1] they came to Acre on the first day of February because of the enmity of the Temple and John of Ibelin, count of Jaffa

In 1258 peace was made between Prince Bohemond and the lord of Arsur who had been at odds with each other. And Balian, son of the lord of Arsur, freed Queen Plaisance, as she did him, of the marriage between them; and the queen, her son and the prince returned to Tripoli. The regency of the kingdom of Jerusalem remained in the hands of John of Ibelin, lord of Arsur.

Rosso della Turca, commander of the Genoese, arrived off Acre with 50 Genoese galleys and 4 ships; he was defeated by 40 Venetian galleys. 24 galleys were captured between Acre and Cayphas and a good 1700 men of Genoa were taken or killed in the conflict. Later an agreement was made whereby the Genoese would give up their tower and their street and go away to Tyre; they must not fly their flag from any boat in Acre harbour; they must have no court or rod in Acre.[2] Then their tower and all the houses in their street were pulled down and the stones from the base of the tower and the columns were taken away to Venice. The Venetians and Pisans used the rest of the stones to fortify their streets.

The Tartars took the land of the Assassins in Persia.[3] John of Ibelin, lord of Arsur and regent of the kingdom of Jerusalem, died.

King Conrad also died, having been reconciled after the death of his father Frederick.[4] He stormed and took Naples after it rebelled against him.

In 1259 Brother Thomas[5] of the Dominican order, bishop of Bethlehem, arrived in Acre as legate from the pope. Geoffrey of Sergines was regent of the kingdom and did much justice, having many thieves and murderers arrested and hanged.

In 1260 the Tartars took by storm Aleppo and Harim, Hama, Horns and Damascus, entered the kingdom of Jerusalem and captured the city of Sidon. Later they were defeated by the sultan of Babylon on 3 September on the plain of Tiberias.[6]

Then *Bandocdar* killed the sultan, who was on his way back to Babylon, and was made sultan instead of him.[1] At this time Julian sold Sidon and Beaufort to the Temple, which later caused great hatred between the king of Armenia and the Temple.[2]

Then the Turcomans defeated John of Ibelin, lord of Beirut, John of Gibelet, marshal of the kingdom, and Brother Stephen of Sissey, marshal of the Temple, with all the brothers of the Acre house, of Château Pèlerin, of Safed, and Beaufort. They took prisoner the lord of Beirut and the commander of the Temple, Brother Matthew Le Sauvage, John of Gibelet, Count Vidans and several other knights. Many others, mounted men and on foot, were killed or captured. The Templars lost all their military equipment. The lord of Beirut was later ransomed for 20,000 bezants. The commander of the Temple, the marshal of the kingdom, James Vidans and several others were also ransomed.

In 1261 Pope Alexander died and was succeeded by Urban.[3]

CHAPTER 4 1261

Alexander was succeeded by Urban IV, born at Troyes in Champagne; he came of a poor family. He was bishop of Verdun and legate in Germany, then patriarch of Jerusalem. It was during his time that the great war between the men of Genoa and Venice took place in Acre and almost destroyed the town; he supported the Venetians.

After this war Brother Thomas of Lentino, bishop of Bethlehem, arrived in Acre as legate, and so the patriarch, angry that this man who ought to be under him was preferred as legate above him, left Syria and went to the court of Rome. But he gave a different reason and told people that he was going in order to have Pope Alexander's gift of St Lazarus of Bethany to St John's Hospital cancelled. After the patriarch had reached the Roman court and stayed there some time, Pope Alexander died and this man was chosen as pope and given the name Urban. He was a man of intrepid courage, and created many cardinals[4] as soon as he was appointed. He gave the kingdom of Sicily and the land of Apulia to Charles, count of Anjou,[5] made him a vicar of the church, granted the privileges and confirmed the whole matter. But he died before Charles went to that land, so that the business could not be completed during his lifetime. He also cancelled the gift of St Lazarus of Bethany which Pope Alexander had made to the Hospital of St John.[6] At Troyes he had the church of St James built, which was later burned.

Balian of Arsur sold Arsur castle with all its appurtenances to the Hospital of St John.

Plaisance, queen of Cyprus, died on 22 September; and Hugh of Lusignan was made regent of Cyprus.[1]

On 25 June the Griffons took Constantinople from the Latins. The Palaeologos made himself emperor and had himself called Constantine.[2]

Notes

1. In the summer of 1239.
2. Theobald IV, count of Champagne (1210–53) and king of Navarre (1234–53).
3. Henry II, count of Bar-le-Duc, 1214-?39.
4. Hugh IV, duke of Burgundy, 1218–72.
5. Peter of Dreux, count of Brittany by marriage 1213–37; died 1250.
6. Guiges V, count of Forez (1203–41) and of Nevers (1239–41).
7. Amaury VI, count of Montfort, 1218–41.
8. John of Dreux, brother of the count of Brittany, count of Mâcon 1234–39.
9. Rukn al-Din al-Hijawi, died 1249.
10. Balian, lord of Sidon, died 1240.
11. Odo, constable of Jerusalem and by marriage lord of Tiberias, died 1244.
12. John of Ibelin, lord of Arsur, died 1258.
13. This expedition took place in November 1239.
1. The exact fate of the count of Bar was never known, as the *Rothelin* tells us above, chapter 28.
2. Al-Muzaffar Mahmud of Hama may have set this rumour going in order to deceive his enemy, the ruler of Horns.
3. Dayfa Khatun bint al-Adil, the regent of Aleppo, was the grandmother, not the mother, of the young heir, al-Nasir Yusuf.
4. Bohemond V, 1233–52.

5. He died on 3 November, according to Peter Jackson, 'The Crusades of 1239 and their Aftermath', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 50 (1987), p. 40; Jackson dates the abortive negotiations with al-Muzaffar to the autumn of 1239.

1. Cayphas is now Haifa; Saffuriya is near Nazareth.
2. Al-Salih Isma'il, ruler of Damascus 1237 and 1239–45.
3. Al-'Adil (I) Sayf al-Din, brother of Saladin and sultan of Egypt; died 1218.
4. Al-Ashraf Musa, ruler of Damascus 1229–37; died 1237.
5. Al-Kamil Muhammad, the brother of al-Ashraf Musa and al-Salih Isma' il and sultan of Egypt (1218–38), ruled in Damascus from 1237 until his death the following year.
6. Al-Salih Ayyub, in fact al-Kamifs second son, ruler of Egypt (1240–49) and Damascus (1245–49).
7. This was the eldest son, al-'Adil (II), ruler of Egypt 1238–40.
8. Al-Jawad Yunus was a grandson of al-'Adil (I) Sayf al-Din (thus a great-nephew of Saladin) and the nephew of al-Kamil, al-Ashraf Musa and al-Salih Isma'il; died in 1244.
9. Al-Nasir Dawud, ruler of Kerak until 1249 and ruler of Damascus (1227–29), tried to use his power over al-Salih Ayyub to regain Damascus. He was the son of al-Mu'azzam Isa, known to Christian sources as Coraidin, ruler of Damascus 1218–27. For an account of the complex dynastic politics of this period, see R.S. Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols: the Ayyubids of Damascus, 1193–1260* (Albany, 1977), chapter 7.
10. Al-Salih Isma'il of Baalbek took control of Damascus in September 1239; it was after this that his nephew al-Salih Ayyub allowed himself to be taken into al-Nasir Dawud's custody. Al-Nasir Dawud then (June 1240) helped al-Salih Ayyub to overthrow al-'Adil II in Egypt and become sultan there.

1. Al-Salih Isma'il, now ruling in Damascus.
2. Beaufort (Qal'at al-Shaqif now in southern Lebanon) had fallen to Saladin in 1190. The Christians reoccupied it from 1240 to 1268. The promise to return all the land between the coast and the Jordan was not kept. See Jackson, 'Crusades of 1239', p. 42 for details.
3. Al-Salih Ayyub, sultan of Egypt from June 1240.
4. Al-Salih Isma'il.
5. The Nahr al-'Auja.
6. This does seem to be what the French text says, somewhat confused here, but it is not correct. Al-Salih Isma'il of Damascus was the uncle; his three nephews were the brothers al-' Adil II, ruling in Egypt 1238–40, and al-Salih Ayyub, and their cousin al-Nasir Dawud of Kerak. Al-Nasir wanted Damascus, and when he heard that his uncle had gained it, he did a deal with his cousin: he would help al-Salih Ayyub get Egypt if the latter would help him get Damascus.

1. On 2 June 1240.
2. Al-Mansur Ibrahim.
3. Theobald left the East in September 1240. Jackson ('Crusades of 1239', pp.44–5) thinks the report of a truce between him and the ruler of Egypt is based on confusion with a later agreement.
4. Master of the Hospitallers, 1239 or 1240–42.
5. The granddaughter of King Amaury, she married Hugh I of Cyprus, Bohemond V of Antioch and Ralph of Soissons; died 1246.
6. Henry I.

1. Isabella II, queen of Jerusalem. The daughter of Alice's half-sister, Maria, and John of Brienne, she married Frederick II in 1225, bore a son, Conrad, and died in 1228, aged 16 or 17.
2. For a recent account of Ralph's disappointment, see P.W. Edbury, *John of Ibelin and the Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 74–5.
3. Richard, earl of Cornwall, was born in 1209, the second son of King John; brother-in-law of Frederick II, he was elected king of the Romans in 1257; died in 1272.
4. They came with the autumn sailing, arriving 8 October 1240.
5. Al-Salih Isma'il.
6. In 1192; for an archaeologist's assessment of Richard's work at Ascalon, see D. Pringle, 'King Richard I and the walls of Ascalon', *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 106 (1984), pp.142–6.

1. In May 1241, after making a truce with the sultan of Egypt; Jackson holds that this truce accomplished nothing more than the release of prisoners, that the sultan was yielding territory over which he had no power and 'the treaty merely recognized the Franks' rule over territories which they had acquired from Ayyub's enemies' (Jackson, 'Crusades of 1239', pp. 47–8).
2. Philip was the son of Guy of Montfort and Helvis of Ibelin, and husband of Maria, heiress of Toron; he and Balian, lord of Beirut (1236–47), were first cousins. The account given here of the end of Hohenstaufen rule in Tyre is seriously at odds with other, more detailed, accounts.

1. Sinibaldo Fieschi, 1243–54.

2. Presumably to discussions before the First Council of Lyon, 28 June-17 July 1245, described in the following chapter.
3. A leading counsellor of Frederick's until his arrest and blinding at the emperor's orders in 1249. Some authorities identify Taddeo de Suessa as Frederick's representative at Lyon; see D. Abulafia, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor* (London, 1988), pp. 368–73.

1. On 17 July 1245.
2. Now Aachen.
3. Innocent's first choice as emperor was Henry Raspe of Thuringia, 1246–47; William was elected on 21 October 1247; his election was confirmed at Lyon by Innocent in 1251; died 1256.
4. 1250.
5. Conrad IV Hohenstaufen, died 1254.

1. For these people and events, see above, *Rothelin*, chapters 40 and 41.

1. La Forbie or Harbiya, 18 October 1244.
2. William was master 1242–44; released 1250.
3. Armand was master of the Templars c. 1233. Captured in 1244, he died in captivity c. 1246.
4. Walter IV count of Brienne, lord of Jaffa and brother-in-law of King Henry I of Cyprus.
5. Peter of Sergines, archbishop of Tyre, 1235–44; Ralph was bishop of Lydda, near Ramla, 1225–44.
6. Bilbeis guards the approaches to Cairo.

1. 18 October.
2. In December 1244.
3. William of Auvergne, 1228–48.

1. The information here is badly garbled. In 1245 al-Salih Ayyub of Egypt and al-Nasir Yusuf of Aleppo made common cause against al-Salih Isma'il in Damascus, which they captured in October 1245. Al-Salih Isma'il was allowed to keep Baalbek and some other properties. He later tried to make an alliance with the Khwarazmians against al-Salih Ayyub, but they were defeated (May 1246) and al-Salih Isma'il took refuge in Aleppo where he was kept under open arrest. Al-Nasir Yusuf of Aleppo had him executed in 1251.
2. Tiberias fell in June 1247, and Ascalon in October.
3. The emperor had given it to them in 1243.
4. Baldwin of Ibelin, seneschal of Cyprus (before 1247–1267), a brother of Balian of Ibelin, lord of Beirut, was among the crusaders captured in Egypt after the defeat at Mansourah in 1250.

1. Safed is in eastern Galilee, north west of the Lake of Tiberias. For the rebuilding by the Templars, see *De constructione castri Saphet*, translated into English in H. Kennedy, *Crusader Castles* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 190–8. Safed fell to the Muslims in 1266.
2. Turkic tribesmen in Anatolia, defeated in a major battle by the Mongols in 1243.

1. Or of Choisi, see Joinville, *Histoire*, chapters 75 and 126.
2. Earl of Dunbar in Scotland.
3. John of Ibelin (died 1258), son of John I (died 1236) and brother of Balian of Ibelin, lord of Beirut.
4. This man is not otherwise known in the sources from the Latin East, which is strange if he was important enough to become regent.
5. Odo of Châteauroux.
6. Robert (1216–49), second son of Louis VIII.
7. Perhaps Beisan in Palestine.

1. William Longsword.
2. Succeeded his father Enguerrand c. 1242.
3. 10 August.
4. 1220–70; the fifth son of Louis VIII, he married Jeanne, heiress of Toulouse.
5. 1226–85, the youngest son of Louis VIII.
6. Of Dampierre; he inherited the county of Flanders from his mother Marguerite; died in 1251.
7. That is, to return to France.
8. Bohemond V.
9. William of Châteauneuf, taken at Gaza in 1244.
10. 13 December 1250.
11. After succeeding his father; died 1254.
12. Frederick II married successively Constance of Aragon, Isabella of Jerusalem and Isabella, sister of Henry III of England. By Constance he had a son Henry (1216–42), king of the Romans; by Isabella of Jerusalem, he had Conrad; by Isabella of England he had another son also called Henry (1238–54). The accusation that Conrad had the younger Henry poisoned is also found in other sources.
13. In 1253.

1. Al-Nasir Yusuf.
2. 6 February 1251.
3. Henry III; 6 March 1250.
4. In fact Nicholas Larcat, archbishop of Tyre 1251–53.
5. Bohemond V, prince of Antioch and count of Tripoli, died in January 1252.
6. Bohemond VI, now aged fifteen, died 1274.
7. Alexander III (reigned 1249–86), married Margaret, daughter of Henry III, on 26 December 1251.
8. Son of Balian I; he married Euphemia (d. 1309) daughter of King Hethoum I of Cilician Armenia (1226–69); unable to defend Sidon, Julian sold it to the Templars in 1260; died 1275.
9. Two neighbouring settlements south east of Acre, both with mills, Tall Da'uk belonging to the Templars and Khirbat Kurdana to the Hospitallers. There was a long-running dispute between the orders over water rights for the mills.
10. Giles, a Breton, had been appointed bishop of Damietta while it was in Christian hands (1249–50) and was now without a see; archbishop of Tyre 1253–66.
11. Balian of Ibelin (d. 1277), son of John of Ibelin, lord of Arsur.
12. Widow of Henry I and regent of Cyprus for her infant son, Hugh II.
13. 25 April.
14. See above *Rothelin*, chapter 59.
15. In fact Margaret.

1. Opizo dei Fieschi, a Genoese, the Latin patriarch of Antioch, 1247–92.
2. John of Ibelin, count of Jaffa (died 1266), regent 1254–6.
3. Bohemond VI of Antioch and count of Tripoli, 1251–75; Sibylla, died 1290.
4. 7 December 1254.
5. Rinaldo, count of Segni, elected as Alexander IV, died 1261.
6. Alexander IV granted the Hospitallers the monastery of Mount Tabor in 1255 and the nunnery of St Lazarus of Bethany in 1256. Bethany itself had been lost to the Muslims in 1187, but a number of its estates had remained in Christian control and so until 1256 an abbess and nuns had managed to support themselves.
7. This was now al-Nasir Yusuf, ruler of Aleppo (1236–60) and Damascus (1250–60).
8. Jacques Pantaleon, patriarch of Jerusalem 1255–61; pope as Urban IV 1261–64.
9. 24 June.
10. Florence, bishop of Acre 1256–62; later archbishop of Arles.
11. See above, *Rothelin*, chapter 37.
12. In Acre; see *Rothelin*, chapter 79.
13. Reynald, master 1250–56; Thomas, master 1256–73.

1. Hugh II of Cyprus (1253–67), still very young, and said to be the closest available heir of Conrad V, son of Conrad IV Hohenstaufen. The point about this shake-up in Acre is that the new regime switched their support in the war of St Sabas from the Genoese to the Venetians, who were winning. See above, *Rothelin*, chapter 79.
2. That is, they could have no court for their own nationals and no wand of office, no jurisdiction.
3. At Alamut in Persia.
4. Reconciled to the Church; see above, p. 136 where his death in May 1254 has already been mentioned.
5. Thomas Agni or Thomas of Lentino, bishop of Bethlehem (1259–67), archbishop of Cosenza, Italy (1267–72), patriarch of Jerusalem (1272–77).
6. At the battle of 'Ayn Jalut.

1. Baybars I of Egypt, who murdered Kutuz on 23 October 1260, reigned from 1260–77; a Cuman sold as a slave in Egypt, his additional name 'al-Bunduqdari' derived from that of his owner.
2. As we saw above in chapter 2, Julian's wife, Euphemia, was a member of the Armenian royal family.
3. Urban IV 1261–64; born Jacques Pantaléon c. 1200 at Troyes, the son of a shoemaker.
4. Fourteen, six of them Frenchmen.
5. Charles, count of Anjou, brother of Louis IX, became king of Sicily in 1266; died 1285.
6. Urban IV cancelled this gift in September 1261, less than a month after his election.

1. Hugh of Lusignan became regent for the child, King Hugh II, after the death of the boy's mother, Queen Plaisance. He was King Hugh's cousin, and on the boy's death aged 14 in 1267 he succeeded to the throne of Cyprus as Hugh III (1267–84).
2. 'Griffons', a frequent and probably pejorative word for Greeks. In 1261 the Greeks of Nicaea seized Constantinople from the Latins who had held it since 1204 and the emperor of Nicaea, Michael (not Constantine) Palaeologos ruled as Emperor Michael VIII (1258–82).

Index

References to Christians, Jews, pilgrims, Saracens, Syrians, Turks, to the Bible, the Holy Land and to Jesus and Muhammad are too frequent to index. Almost all individuals are listed under their first names, not by surname or title. For different churches, see under the collective entry Churches, and so too for the various Gates and Streets in Jerusalem.

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